

THE TIMES



40P

No. 65,702

SATURDAY OCTOBER 5 1996

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MAGAZINE



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Aylard: advised Prince to adopt "open" policy

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Palace, determined at all costs to repair the damage of the Prince's divorce. The Prince's confession of adultery prompted the Princess of Wales to make her own televised confession about an affair with Major James Hewitt; from the lofty heights of Buckingham Palace, the whole coinage of royalty appeared to be in a downward spiral of devaluation.

The private secretary's own personal circumstances did not help him; he is currently in divorce proceedings with his second wife, with whom he has two young daughters.

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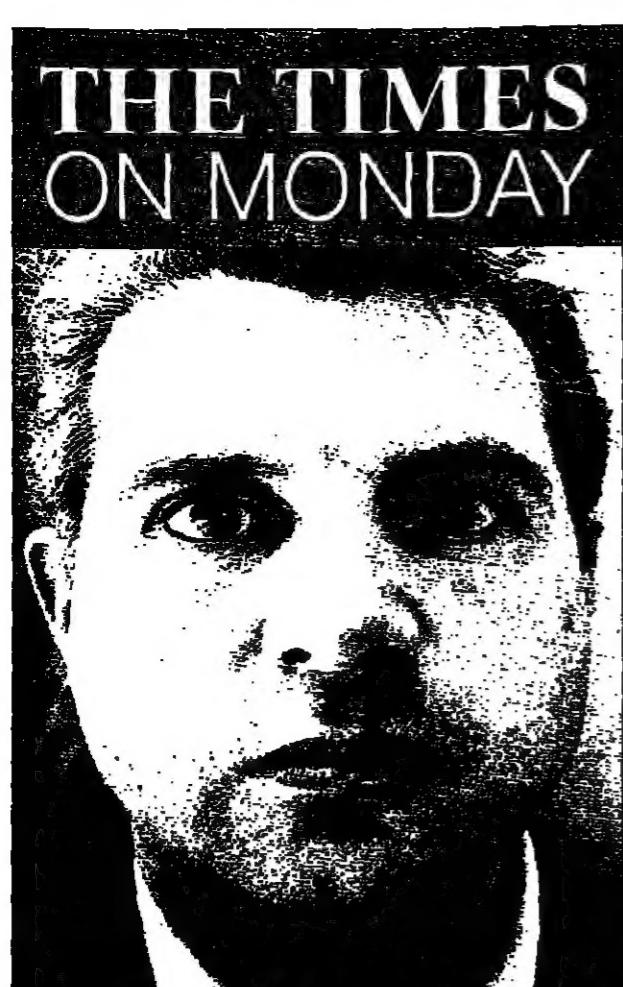
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ANATOMY OF AN ENIGMA

In part one of Michael Peppiatt's extraordinary biography of Francis Bacon: the cold and cruel childhood that shaped genius

14-PAGE SPORTS SECTION

12 CRUCIAL DAYS IN FOOTBALL

Rob Hughes on the make or break fixtures in English football

PLUS:
STEVE McMANAMAN
on Paul Gascoigne



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EVERY MONDAY: MATTHEW PARRIS,
COLUMNIST OF THE YEAR

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MATTHEW PARRIS
POLITICAL SKETCH

Blunder makes Party go with a bang

It was a pretty loud bang and everybody thought a bomb had gone off. Or had someone been shot? The music stopped. Delegates dancing in the aisles froze. There was complete silence as people stared around in alarm.

Then from above came a rain of little leaflets — Vote Labour — fired from the Winter Gardens balcony. There was a brave "three cheers". Labour's composure returned but it took time. Until the music restarted, people milled distractingly around, the mood of celebration shattered.

It was the first and only big blunder in a week otherwise almost without incident, and it came in the closing minutes. As delegates and journalists left Blackpool, it remained unclear how the mistake could have been made. Why was the

explosion so loud? Why did they halt the music?

Everything about the closing rally had been going so well. John Prescott had been welcomed with a standing ovation even before he spoke. After the now-routine video (the novelty of conference video is gone and people are growing bored with them) he made a rousing speech with some good jokes, some bad jokes and some indifferent ones. All alike were greeted with gales of laughter from a rank and file in whose eyes Mr Prescott had no wrong.

There were moments for his patter when we wondered whether we had wandered into the wrong arena at Black-

pool and found ourselves watching Frank Carson, with Eddie Large's voice.

Labour's deputy leader did his best to keep to his pre-released text — Mr Prescott's controllers now steer him away from all unscripted encounters with Britain — but there was one stumble and it proved the bit delegates loved best. Losing the crib-card of Labour's promises he had planned to hold up, Prescott exploded: "I knew this would happen. You know me. I'm old Labour. Got to use my own words."

Everybody cheered. Spin-doctors' video-pagers flashed "off-message" warnings to new Labour's command-con-

trol centre on the Planet Vanilla. "Off-message" is the PR speak for signals out of line with the desired image. "We believe in socialist principles!" declared Prescott. Off-message!

— Beep — Urgent — Abort. Yet some of the best of Labour's conference has been off-message — or superfluous to the gloss which some want to project. For this is still a party with kindness and idealism in its ranks. The night before, Prescott's speech I found myself in a room with over videos or flashy displays, for a reception for Alf Morris MP, who is retiring.

The compassionate and tireless Morris has worked for decades for the disabled: Sense (the deaf blind association) together with Alzheimer's and muscular dystrophy groups wanted to thank him. Tony Blair, who must have been exhausted, took the trouble to

come and made a moving speech.

Off-message or not, delegates gave Prescott a rousing ovation yesterday, and all went well — before the bang. But what a change that explosion wrought! The edgy confidence the party has exuded all week evaporated instantly. One bang, one bad stumble, and it was as though delegates feared they had only been dreaming and the game was up. Would a giant spectre of Mrs Thatcher come winging, bat-like, through the hall, as everyone ran screaming for cover?

Confidence returned. Cameramen ambushed a toddler dancing to *It Can Only Get Better*. Scared by the camera flashes, the child stopped and began to cry. Image of weeping babe. Off-message! Off-message! The toddler was hauled away.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Cattle cull backlog on farms

At least 400,000 over-age cattle are waiting on farms to be destroyed in response to the BSE scare, more than twice the previous estimate, the Government said.

To deal with the "fresh emergency", ministers promised measures soon to raise the slaughter rate from 35,000 to 55,000 a week and to help farmers, who face the expense of having to keep unproductive animals for up to an extra three months.

Car murder

A man who ran over his sister-in-law three times after she abandoned an arranged marriage was jailed for life for murder at Leeds Crown Court yesterday. Shabir Hussain of Bradford killed Tasleem Sadiq Begum as she met a lover.

Poison dog dies

Dog owners were warned yesterday to guard their pets when a fourth dog died after walking on grass near a housing estate at Thornaby, Stockton-on-Tees. Three earlier deaths were caused by pesticide-laced bait.

Maginnis cleared

Police are to take no action against the Ulster Unionist MP Ken Maginnis over allegations of assault at his London flat. He was questioned after a neighbour claimed he was struck when he went to complain about noise.

Tester jailed

Andrew Stone, 32, of Fareham, Hampshire, a convicted fraudster used by Which? to test cashpoints, was jailed for 5½ years at Southwark Crown Court, southeast London, after he went on to plunder £130,000.

Pay de deux

Two teachers who were unfairly dismissed from the renowned Eltham Palace School in Camberley, Surrey, by a new headmaster who thought they were too old-fashioned won a total of more than £20,000 compensation.

Peace award

Senator George Mitchell is to receive a peace award for his efforts to foster a settlement in Northern Ireland. The chairman of the multi-party talks will receive the accolade from the cross-border group Co-operation North.

Ex-director jailed

Nigel Burrows, 42, of Bedale, North Yorkshire, a former director of Manchester United football club, was jailed for two years yesterday at Sheffield Crown Court for stealing £145,000 a widow had given him to invest.

MoD discovery throws new light on Gulf War syndrome

Pesticides might have poisoned service personnel

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

PESTICIDES might have poisoned some of the servicemen and women suffering from so-called Gulf War syndrome, according to the latest Ministry of Defence research. The pesticides were used in heavy doses against a plague of disease-carrying flies and bugs in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

A senior MoD official said the discovery that British troops serving in the Gulf in 1990 and 1991 had been engaged in much larger-scale pesticide spraying than had been realised did not solve the mystery over the many illnesses affecting hundreds of Gulf War veterans. "This is not the answer for those claiming to be suffering from Gulf War syndrome but it could be a factor," he said. It was sufficiently important a discovery for it to be thoroughly reviewed by a special MoD medical assessment team

headed by Group Captain Bill Coker, a consultant physician who has been examining all those claiming to be suffering from Gulf War syndrome.

MoD medical experts said the organophosphate pesticides similar to ones used in sheep-dipping although in much smaller doses, would have caused serious sickness almost immediately if inhaled during spraying.

Organophosphate insecticides, including diazinon, which is acknowledged to be a dangerous substance if used without proper protection, were sprayed on all the British military tents because of the "large problem of flies" affecting British troops in Saudi Arabia. The Americans who were also suffering from plagues of flies and bugs, used the same insecticides.

The MoD medical experts said the number of British military personnel possibly suffering from pesticide poisoning would have been small, affecting those involved in carrying out the spraying. One official said it might have been only about half a dozen.

The medical reports on the 750 Gulf War veterans examined so far will now be reviewed to see if any of them had suffered from symptoms associated with organophosphate poisoning, including tingling and numbness in the fingers and toes.

Although poisoning from pesticides normally manifested itself within three months, there could be longer-term cases where personnel had further contact with the pesticides on other occasions. It could then lead to asthma, the medical experts said.

More than 1,100 Gulf War veterans are now suffering from a range of illnesses, including chronic fatigue, swollen joints and headaches. The area worst affected by flies was at Al Jubayl, the huge port on the east coast of Saudi Arabia where the majority of Britain's 50,000 Gulf War troops were based.

Because pesticide supplies sent from Britain were inadequate to deal with the plague of flies, permission was given for stocks to be bought from local sources. The MoD official said some of the pesticides might have been sprayed in



Nicholas Soames, left, the defence minister, told Michael Colvin, of the defence committee, of findings

breach of strict procedures and this was now being investigated.

The senior MoD official said every attempt was being made to discover whether there was any common factor among those suffering from illnesses which could be directly related to their service in the Gulf. A big research programme into Gulf health issues is to be launched next month, overseen by the Medical Research Council.

The official denied that any British troops could have been affected by a chemical cloud that rose from an Iraqi chemical weapons bunker destroyed by American bombers. Up to 14,000 American soldiers could have been affected.

The official said the nearest British troops to the so-called "bunker 73" were more than 87 miles away to the south of the chemical dump. CIA investigators had discovered that the chemical cloud had drifted northeast about 15 miles, the official said.

The details of the discovery

Hamilton wins support of local party officials

BY ANDREW PIERCE, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

OFFICERS of Neil Hamilton's Conservative constituency association rallied behind the Tory MP yesterday in an attempt to end speculation about his future.

Tories accused *The Guardian* of running a dishonest and hysterical vendetta against the former Trade Minister.

A statement, in the name of Alan Barnes, the chairman, which was unanimously approved by the association's 12 officers, said that most members of the 1,800-strong association had reacted with anger to the "torrent of abuse" against their MP. "It was anger followed by intense sympathy for Mr and Mrs Hamilton at their victimisation."

Mr Barnes' statement, which followed reports of dissent within the constituency, said there were no plans for a meeting to discuss Mr Hamilton's future.

The allegations by *The Guardian*, that Mr Hamilton had accepted cash for questions from Mohamed Al Fayed, the owner of Harrods, have been referred to Sir Gordon Downey, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards.

The statement added: "Neil has absolute confidence that he will be exonerated. We have absolute confidence in him."

Brian Mawhinney, the Tory Party chairman, yesterday described Mr Hamilton as a good and hard working MP. Pressed on whether Mr Hamilton enjoyed the support of the party high command and the

Prime Minister, he replied: "As we speak, he certainly has my support."

Mr Hamilton kept a low profile in the constituency yesterday as he talked to party officers. His wife, Christine, dismissed speculation that he faced deselection.

"We've had the most wonderful support from the Tatton Constituency Association. In a funny way, all these lies and the misrepresentation that has come out from the media in the last few days have actually stiffened their support for Neil," she told Greater Manchester Radio.

Lbour spent the day trying to limit the fallout from the dismissal on Thursday of a frontbench spokesman in the House of Lords who publicly supported Ian Greer the lobbyist at the centre of the cash-for-questions affair.

Tony Blair, the Labour leader, stressed that Baroness Turner, the party's employment spokesman who was a non-executive director of Ian Greer Associates, had "behaved very honourably". But he added: "There was a potential conflict of interest and therefore she stood down."

Baroness Turner, 69, who took part in a routine board meeting at IGA yesterday, issued a statement saying: "I have stepped down from the front bench which I regret doing, because I believe I was a good employment spokesman. But I do so knowing that my leader in the Lords acknowledges that I was not guilty of any impropriety."

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Life sentence for high-living career criminal

Conman plotted £20m kidnap from prison

By RICHARD DUCE AND PETER FOSTER

AN ARCH conman who plotted from his prison cell to kidnap one of the wealthiest men in Britain to fund a luxury lifestyle on his release was jailed for life at the Old Bailey yesterday.

Sacheverell De Houghton, 56, was already serving ten years for kidnapping and blackmailing another man when he laid his elaborate plans to raise £20 million. The Oxford graduate, who claimed to have known the Earl of Lucan and the Kray twins, had nurtured his taste for the high life during frequent stays in prison for offences of dishonesty and deception.

Judge Gordon told De Houghton: "You are a highly intelligent man but a highly dangerous one. It is very sad that someone with such obvious abilities should have chosen to spend his life the way he has. The public has got to be protected."

De Houghton was cleared of conspiring to murder the multimillionaire, known only as G, but was convicted of incitement to kidnap. During the month-long trial the jury was told that De Houghton, born in India 56 years ago to a military family, was known to police simply as Stanley Houton, a career criminal.

He claimed to have attended Eton, but in fact went to a Reading state school. He then



De Houghton: known to police as Stanley Houton

won a scholarship to Christchurch to read history, where he funded his social life in London by stealing from fellow students. He boasted to the jury of "liberating" valuable items and, in spite of his homosexuality, saw himself as a "debs' delight".

While in prison he took up compulsive letter-writing to strangers. His erudition and literary knowledge often led to lengthy correspondence with people with no knowledge of his criminal past.

After being imprisoned in 1992 he focused his attention on "preparing for the day he was to be released and wished to make substantial funds so that he could enjoy life", William Boyce, for the prosecution, told the court. He set up bank accounts, negotiated the purchase of a castle in the Hebrides and a Cornish estate, set up bank accounts in Cornwall and Denmark, engaged solicitors, and found a printer for his letterheads and business cards.

His target was the "phenomenally rich" millionaire, and the money was to be extorted under torture. "It is clear that what was intended was to entice G to a quiet location, extract from him by force a very large sum of money and then, probably by using drugs, cause him to lose his memory, mind or life," the

instructions to transfer the money — after G had agreed under torture, the prosecution said. However, among helpers outside prison recruited by De Houghton was an undercover detective.

De Houghton was still "beavering away" inside prison, writing to banks and surveyors. "He wrote then inviting G to go to Scotland to view the furniture," Mr Boyce said. By February 1996, however, there were fears that De Houghton had become suspicious of the undercover policeman. Detectives decided to make arrests. The prosecution said that De Houghton had also attempted to recruit a former fellow-prisoner, Everton Morrison, to help him.

Mr Morrison, 30, of Croydon, south London, was cleared of conspiring to murder the millionaire. The jury could not agree on a verdict on a further charge against both men of conspiring together to kidnap, and the charge was left off the file.

John McVicar, the writer and criminologist, was a fellow inmate of De Houghton at Wandsworth prison in 1964. Yesterday he remembered him as an entertaining Wildean figure. "Like me he was interested in literature and books, only better read. He played the class ticket: I suppose people didn't think he was the type to be a crook."



Samantha Slater wearing a sari in Trissur prison, where she has spent two years

PETER NICHOLLS

Model in Indian jail freed after campaign

By COOMI KABOUR AND LIN JENKINS

A BRITISH model has been released from a ten-year prison term in India for possessing drugs after a campaign culminating in an appeal by Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary.

Samantha Slater, 25, from Birmingham, who was convicted of possessing cannabis resin two years ago while backpacking in the country, has been pardoned and released from Trissur central prison in Kerala state. She told an Indian journalist that she has been miserable and fed an "unsatisfactory" diet.

The intervention of Mr Rifkind followed repeated requests from the British authorities, including the former and the present High Commissioner. Miss Slater's mother, Brenda, who is planning to fly to India, said last night: "I can't believe my Sam is finally coming home. I won't have to spend another Christmas without her."

Miss Slater and her boyfriend Andrew Hesketh were spending six months exploring the subcontinent when they were stopped by police January 1992 at Idukki in the mountains south of Goa.

Tracey MacDonald, a family friend, said Miss Slater was mentally well, but suffering from malnutrition. Mr Hesketh, 27, who was jailed for three years and fined, is due to be released next January.

Village loner shot at WPC after pea wine binge

By MICHAEL HORNSBY, COUNTRYSIDE CORRESPONDENT

A JUDGE expressed sympathy yesterday for a man who took pot shots at his neighbour's house with an air rifle after drinking too much of his own pea-pod wine at a village fair.

Vincent Vines, 52, had come to feel like a stranger in his village because of the many newcomers who had moved in. Gloucester Crown Court was told. He was said to spend most of his time alone brewing the wine.

Judge Hutton, who heads the Gloucestershire branch of the Council for the Protection of Rural England, said: "He is not alone in thinking like that. I sympathise with him. This is something which is happening all over the country, particularly in Gloucestershire."

Vines began shooting after neighbours rejected his offer of the potent wine at a Guy Fawkes party in Hillesley. Peter Heyward, for Vines, said: "He is a lonely and isolated man in the village where he has lived most of his life. Newcomers have moved in and for this typical country-village life has changed beyond all recognition. It is no longer the village he grew up in and loved."

"He had brewed a large quantity of a good and strong traditional English country wine — pea-pod wine. It is clear that pea-pod wine is a strong wine, one with a kick in it — a kick stronger than an air rifle."

"The people at the bonfire party refused his drink and he felt he had been ostracised by

the newcomers to the village. He is a traditional country-man with good country skills."

Don Tait, for the prosecution, said: "He was clearly drunk and was rude and abusive to other people at the party. He tried to offer them drinks but they refused. Then he began singing bawdy songs and was told to go."

After Vines had returned home, neighbours opposite heard him shouting. They then saw him standing in his bedroom window waving an air rifle around. "A woman police officer arrived and saw him aiming the rifle at her," Mr Tait said.

"She heard a shot and a pellet hit the ground nearby. She called for support and police marksmen were called in as well as the police helicopter. A stand-off, which lasted three hours and brought the village to a halt, ended when Vines left his cottage shouting and waving a garden spade."

"He was arrested and when the officers searched his home they discovered 53 gallons of home-made wine. Obviously he had tried the wine with fairly lethal consequences."

Vines admitted possessing an air rifle while committing criminal damage and was ordered to do 200 hours' community service. The judge told him: "You have got to learn to live with changing conditions. I understand Hillesley, like many other villages, is not what it was, but you have to change with it."

The Waterman Doll

Two-inch pen sold for £1,800

By JOHN SHAW

A TWO-INCH fountain pen, believed to be the smallest in the world, was auctioned for £1,840 in London yesterday. The black Waterman Doll, about 80 years old and still working, was sold in its original box to a collector for just above its estimate.

The 1,000-lot sale at Bonhams attracted worldwide interest. A red Waterman 416 with a silver filigree decoration fetched £4,370.

A Mont Blanc limited-edition Octavia from 1993 made £1,750 and another limited-edition pen from the same firm, a Louis XIV from 1994, went for £1,700.

Leading article, page 21

Fasting hermit is tempted by inn's lasagne and chips

By RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

A HERMIT who aimed to fast for 40 days on a hill above Loch Lomond managed only 27 before staggering down to a hotel and ordering lasagne and chips.

The bearded and bedraggled hermit had set up his tent on Benlonmond Hill, Central Scotland, where temperatures are below freezing at night and barely creep above 9C (48F) during the day, to spend his time in meditation and prayer. He told the staff of Rowardennan Hotel that he was a monk from Scandinavia and gave his name as Father Oucheronky. They were so worried by his starved appearance that they called an ambulance.

Sharon Johnston, the manageress, said the middle-aged man was wearing a heavy jumper, jeans and a light jacket when he arrived on the hotel doorstep earlier this week. "He obviously had not washed for some days. He was

a horrible colour and looked at death's door."

"We gave him a bowl of soup and a bit of bread, but he began to feel even more ill. I think it may have been his body rejecting the food. The ambulance arrived and they led him out to it, but he returned after he felt better and ate a lasagna and chips."

She said the hermit, who spoke good English, seemed distressed that he had failed to keep his fast for 40 days, the time spent by Christ in the wilderness, and left disconsolately to spend the night in a youth hostel.

"She was really strange," she said. "He was trying to get closer to God, those were his words. We do get a lot of these hermits in the summer, but never usually at this time of year. I think they must be mad."

The hermit later returned to the hills to collect his belongings and it is believed that he

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SATURDAY OCTOBER 5 1996

CAR 96

The competition-beating XK8 is pure Jaguar, says Kevin Eason

So cool, it could have been Lyons-made

Right price, right pace, right time: a drive in the big cat's new sports car can only silence the critics

The scope for error was vast. Bob Dover knows that living with a legend is all very well, but the expectations are high when the wraps come off every new Jaguar.

Sir William Lyons built one of the most famous names in the motoring world with a succession of ground-breaking designs to create some of the most desirable cars of all time. Trouble is that the legacy of legend can be hard to bear in a tougher world when the gap between the competition is razor thin.

But Mr Dover can sleep easily in his bed tonight, for the XK8 is a car that Sir William would have approved of. Jaguar has found the perfect balance between the grand tourer and nimble sports car... and at a bargain-basement price that will set the competition on its ear. All Sir William's cars were value-for-money, and XK8 is no different: £47,950 for the coupe — between £32,000 and £35,000 cheaper than BMW, Mercedes or Aston Martin rivals offering equivalent performance and equipment.

The XK8 was the most demanding programme yet set for Jaguar by its Ford owner because it had to be delivered from concept to finished car in 30 months. In fact, the engineering team came in three months ahead of schedule — a cost saving of about £30 million — and they surpassed every tough target set on quality to make this the best-built Jaguar ever, according to Nick Scheele, Jaguar's chairman. This is a British car that could set Japanese standards for reliability and quality, he says, levels which could never be achieved on the outgoing XJS.

Because XK8 is based on the old XJS platform, worries ran high that the car would be little more than a revamp of the old barge. The XJS has been Jaguar's best-selling sports car, but it had 20 years of production and, in truth, was as unloved as a car can get, with more flying buttresses than the average cathedral. Any carry-over would have destroyed the XK8's chances. In fact, Dover, XK8's chief engineer, says that the car is 80 per cent new, 10 per cent from the XJ saloons and only about 10 per cent — essentially the platform — from the XJS.

At the heart of the changes is a new power-train which is as much a step forward as anything to have come from Jaguar in its history. Jaguar has had only three generations of engine since 1948, all six and 12-cylinder power-packs. The fourth generation departs radically from history in that it is built outside the company — by Ford in Bridgend though designed entirely in-house — and that it is a V8, which is refined, effortless and



The bonnet diving down to the E-Type style grille is as distinctive a piece of imagery as anything currently on the road. Beneath lies an all-new V8 which proves refined, effortless and powerful

powerful with astonishing acceleration in the mid-range — the place you need it when you want to overtake or pull through tricky uphill bends. Dover reckons the engineering team wanted the torque, or pulling power, to feed in as soon as the throttle is pushed and there is no doubt that they got it right.

There is no manual gearchange, because Jaguar says that there is no demand. No wonder, because the new five-speed automatic transmission is so smooth and efficient that changes up or down are barely noticed.

While other carmakers have added sequential semi-automatic gearboxes — so the driver pushes forward to change up and back to go down — as the manual alternative in an auto box, Jaguar has stuck resolutely to its J-gate system. It was the right decision because it is so easy to use, the stick simply pushed from second to third and so on. Unlike a sequential change, the driver always knows what gear the car is in because of the location of the gearstick.



Traditional interior comforts feature a magical sound system

Not that even a run of tough and twisting roads needed much gear-changing on first test, such is the flexibility of the new power-train. Second will take the car up to almost 90mph, the V8 growling gently under the long, fluted bonnet. Even when working the car hard, the ride is stable but with enough feedback through the bump and lumps. Add to that the sort of ride you would expect to feel in a Jag and the car becomes

old XJS swallowed, the XK8 springs into action, turning sharply and accurately, the ride always predictable and sure-footed.

Part of that responsiveness comes from a much-improved body and chassis, which is 25 per cent stiffer than the XJS so that there is no flexing of metal through bumps and lumps. Add to that the XK8 does not look fabulous, particularly as a convertible. The

one of the most enjoyable to drive in any price bracket, not least because the company has retained the virtues prized most by its traditional buyers.

Forget criticism you might have read that XK8 is too bulky and too like its distant and also Ford-owned cousin, the Aston Martin DB7; I defy anyone to tell me that the XK8 does not look fabulous,

particularly as a convertible. The bonnet diving down to the E-Type style grille is as distinctive a piece of imagery as anything currently on the road, as you will discover when you see an XK8 appear in your rear-view mirror.

Inside, the XK8 offers the traditional comforts: wood and tasteful leather, a restful but clear set of dials... and one new option which biasts the opposition: a 240-watt ten-speaker sound system tailored

to the XK8's acoustics by Harmon Kardon, the American specialists who won a wind-up-carving session with Mischa Elgar, Saint-Saëns and Sting, the system catapulted itself from Jaguar option to a "must have" for me.

That touch of extra magic — rarely found among even the most expensive cars — speaks volumes for Jaguar. Other carmakers could produce a valid argument on behalf of the cars competing with the XK8 in an almost overcrowded marketplace. Mercedes could argue for the logic of its engineering, BMW for its reliability, Porsche for its sporting heritage.

But marques rarely appeal to the heart in the way that Jaguar does. The engineering of the XK8 is not just the best to have come out of Coventry in the 60 years since the business was founded, but the car is covered in tiny details, touches which make the driver and passenger feel special as soon as they clutch the keys.

Bob Dover's brief said the XK8 had to be "sensuous, instantly desirable, exhilarating and stirring". It is and it does.

E-TYPE V XK8



The quarter-century difference belies some striking similarities

They are soul-sisters, a quarter of a century apart, writes Sue Baker. I drove them minutes apart, and it was a time-warp of familiarity. Stepping out of an XK8 and into a newly restored E-type underlined striking similarities and unexpected differences.

The new Jaguar is the E-type for the Nineties, evocatively restyled, still a sleek and sultry big cat, but fatter and less feral.

The model that is the XK8's historical benchmark has more front and less behind, with a body dominated by its famously phallic bonnet and encasing a narrower, sparser cabin. But it still manages to rival the newcomer for headroom and beats it for visibility.

The E-type tested is a Series II, 4.2-litre 2+2. When it was new in 1970 it cost £2,708. It was shared by two brothers who drove it hard and with little concern for its future as a covetable classic.

When owner Ray Arnewell bought it eight years ago for £4,000, it was a rusty non-runner, unused for a decade. It has just emerged from a total restoration, which cost conservatively £25,000, not including hundreds of hours of preparation work by its owner. It is now effectively a 1970s car built in the 1990s, with body panels rust-protected and fitted a far higher standard than when new.

Driving both cars back-to-back was as much a reminder of how good a car the E-type was in its day as an endorsement of the XK8's status as E-type reinvented.

The height of the two cars is similar, but from the inside the XK8 feels more enclosing. It has a higher waistline and the window area feels smaller, giving the new Jaguar a slightly more claustrophobic

Model: Series II fixed-head coupé 2+2.
Engine: 4.2-litre, six-cylinder, 265 bhp.
Dimensions: wheelbase: 8ft 9in; length: 15ft 4in; width: 5ft 6in.
Top speed: 139mph.
Consumption: avg. 18.20 mpg; touring, 25 mpg.
Insurance: £200-£250 on an agreed-value, limited-mileage (3,000 miles annually) classic car policy.
Original Price: £2,708.71
Value: £25,000.

bic feeling. That is despite the XK8 having perceptibly more elbow-room, even though its cabin is conspicuously more sylvatic.

The E-type commands just as much attention. But no novelty here — it was simply in warm admiration of an unarguably dramatically beautiful car.

If an XK8 driving fast in the year 2022 still carries as many second looks as a renovated E-type does today, only then can it truly pass as a worthy successor.

DB7 V XK8



Gorgeous looks, but at a price

Model: Aston Martin DB7 5.2 litre
Engine: supercharged in-line 358bhp six-cylinder.
0-60: 5.7 secs.
Top speed: 165mph.
Dimensions: length: 4.646mm.
Price: Coupe £82,500; convertible £94,950

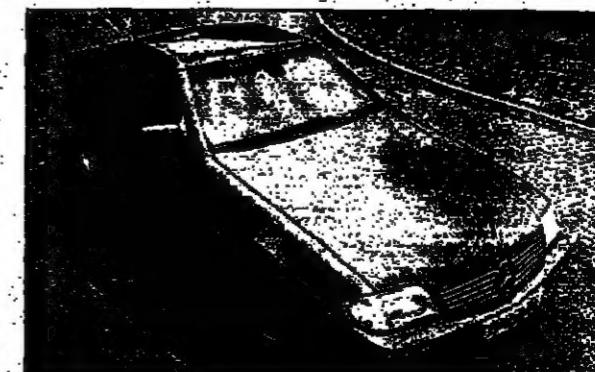
The similarity between the Aston Martin DB7 and the XK8 could be too close for comfort — for Aston, anyway. Those curved DB7 haunches and long overhangs tell the story of its heritage, cloned from the Jaguar XJS platform and with a straight-six supercharged 3.2-litre developed from a Jaguar race engine.

Both cars share a similarly mesmeric presence on the road. Whenever I drove it, the XK8's subtle, sensuous shape swivelled heads in its wake. But they were being turned more by its novelty, days ahead of its official release.

The E-type commanded just as much attention. But no novelty here — it was simply in warm admiration of an unarguably dramatically beautiful car.

If an XK8 driving fast in the year

Mercedes



By comparison, it's both overweight and overpriced

Model: Mercedes SL500.
Engine: 5-litre, 32-valve V8 developing 325bhp through five-speed automatic transmission driving rear wheels.
0-62: 6.5 secs.
Top speed: 155mph (electronically limited).
Consumption: 17.7mpg in town.
Dimensions: length: 4.703mm, width: 1.812mm.
Price: £20,700 basic

The result in the SL500, which offers almost similar performance to an XK8, is of a bloated, muscle-bound motor — like being lugger by one of the Gladiators rather than waif and beguiled. Acceleration is bludgeoning, but the sound feedback from the Merc's V8 is industrial rather than seductive. However, the handling is as safe and sound as you would expect from a Mercedes.

Being part of the same Ford family should not be a problem, although the XK8's value for money could be trying for Aston. Look for some Aston derivatives soon to try to catch the eye.

It is a busy day, but that does not make the model more lovable. In fact, the SL — a car born in the 1980s when big was better — looks forlorn in the Nineties when swooping shapes and curves are in vogue and when its little sister, the SLK, looks cute and cuddly.

There is another thing if you are deciding about buying a new sports car: the SL range starts at £57,700 for the 2.8-litre and zooms up to £97,450 for the SL60 AMG and you still have to buy your own stereo.

TONY WHITE

Lord Chief Justice sets liberal tone with initiatives on human rights and life sentences

Bingham aims to banish mystery of jurors' room

BY FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

THE new Lord Chief Justice yesterday paved the way for the first investigation into the secrets of the jury room, saying that he was in favour of allowing research into how juries reached their verdicts.

In his first public appearance as the most senior serving judge, Lord Bingham of Cornhill also made clear that he would lead judicial opposition to the Home Secretary's plans for tougher sentencing, expected in the Queen's Speech.

Lord Bingham is the first senior judge publicly to support a change in the law to allow research into how juries operate. The change was steadfastly opposed by his two predecessors, Lord Taylor of Gosforth and Lord Lane, although it is supported by the Lord Chancellor, Lord Mackay of Clashfern, and was recommended by the Royal Commission on Criminal Justice in 1993.

Predecessors feared that it would encourage appeals based on what juries did or said while considering a verdict. But Lord Bingham said yesterday: "The time has

come, without opening the door to these real dangers, to enable some very serious, real and objective — and anonymous — research into the way in which juries reach their decisions."

At present there was ignorance about how jurors reacted to judges' directions and how they would react to knowing previous convictions, he said.

In his first press conference since taking office four months ago, Lord Bingham, 63 next week, set a liberal tone for his tenure. He urged incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights into British law, ending of the Home Secretary's role in fixing life sentences, and the end of mandatory life sentences.

He denied that judges were too lenient, although he accepted that that was the "public perception". He was, however, in favour of giving the Attorney-General wider powers to appeal when sentences were considered insufficient.

Lord Bingham stressed that he would be no less tough on the Government's proposals

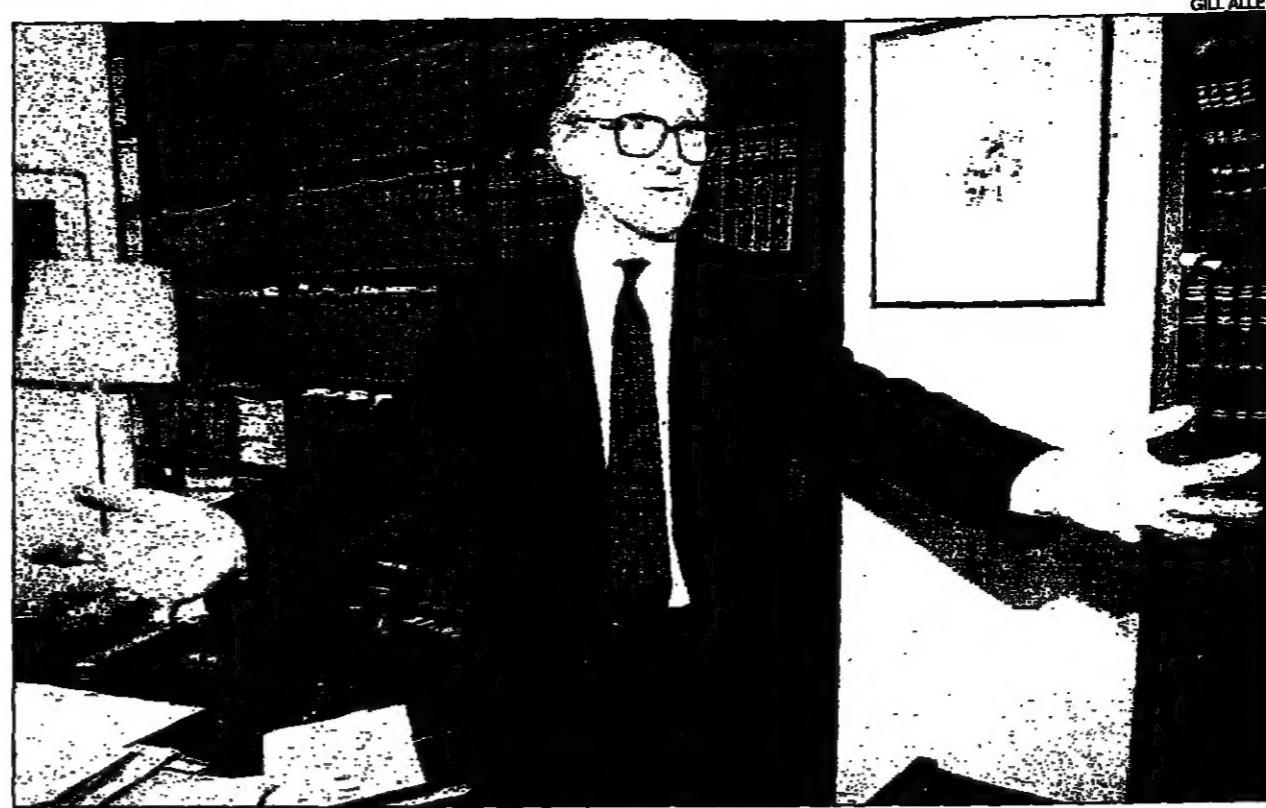
for sentencing changes than Lord Taylor, who retired because of ill health. "I very much hope that the Home Secretary and Parliament will leave the judges with their sentencing discretion for the reasons rehearsed by my predecessor," he said.

Judges, who had heard all the witnesses and were aware of complex issues, and the atmosphere generated in a case, "should not be told they have to do this or that or the other in a particular case, willy-nilly".

At the same time, Lord Bingham indicated that he wanted to stop any suggestion of a power battle between judges and government with judges taking on the Government through judicial review decisions.

"Judges have gone to great lengths to make it clear that they are not usurping the decision-making powers of officials and that they bring no political axe to grind."

He cautioned judges against speaking out in a way that could "undermine their reputation for impartiality and neutrality". But he said that



Lord Bingham in his office at the High Court. He will not shy away from opposing Tory sentencing plans

they had a part to play in discussions about matters, such as sentencing, within their field of experience.

Lord Bingham rejected any move to stop defendants acting for themselves and cross-examining their victims. "The public would be deeply offended to be told 'you must employ a lawyer,'" he said. It would be seen as the profession trying to entrench its monopolies still further.

On Mr Howard's proposals for mandatory life sentences for second-time rapists and violent offenders, and minimum sentences for repeat burglars and drug offenders, Lord Bingham said that there was no difference between Lord Taylor's views and his own, although he might have expressed them differently.

"The interests of justice are served by allowing judges, to the maximum extent, to tailor a sentence to the circumstances of a particular case, which they are in a unique position to judge." The case for

ending mandatory life sentences for murder had, in his view, been made convincingly.

On the Home Secretary's role in fixing the tariff — the period a prisoner jailed for life spends in jail — he preferred the system as applied to "discretionary" life prisoners under which the Parole Board decides the release date.

Lord Bingham said that he would be unhappy if Michael Howard's "two strikes and you're out" proposals found favour, unless there was some

qualification which enabled judges to depart from the rule in appropriate cases, giving their reasons.

He rejected the notion that judges were out of touch with society, saying that there had been a big change from a few years ago when "judges were characterised as bloodthirsty old men".

Now they were seen as "liberal pinkos who never punished anyone". My own view is that neither of these is close to the truth," he said.

A newspaper apologised and agreed to pay substantial libel damages to Bill Cash, MP for Stafford, over the use of his name in a satirical article. The piece, in *The Scotsman*, depicted a "William Cash-Purchase MP" as "cynical, corrupt and dishonest". Mr Cash's solicitor, Richard Martin, told Mr Justice French in the High Court.

Sperm case ends

Sir Stephen Brown, President of the High Court Family Division, reserved judgment on the submission by a 30-year-old Midland widow for the right to have a baby using her late husband's sperm.

Russells funeral

The funerals of Lin and Megan Russell, killed at Chilenden, Kent, in July, will be held today at Dolbeamor, near Caernarfon. The procession to church will be led by Shaun Russell and daughter Josie, who survived the attack.

Plane loses wheel

A cargo plane made an emergency landing at Belfast airport when a wheel from its undercarriage was found on the runway after it had taken off from Coventry. The plane landed safely and there were no injuries.

Long haul flight

Birdwatchers were out in force yesterday after a black and white warbler, a rare North American visitor to Britain blown here by western gales, was spotted in a garden near Beachy Head, East Sussex.

£10m Beauty

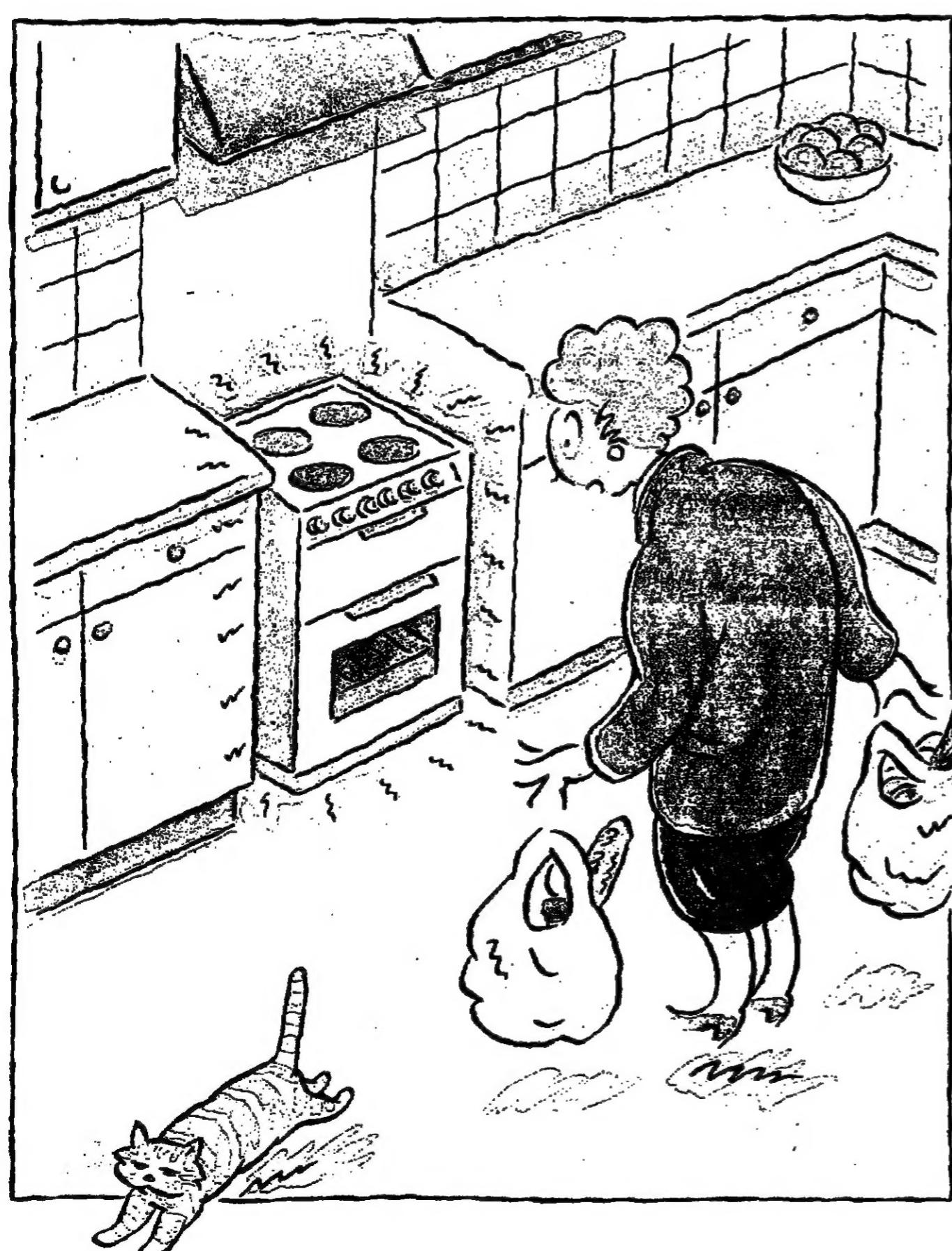
A £10 million musical production of the Walt Disney cartoon *Beauty and the Beast* will open in London next year. The show, which opens on May 13 at the Dominion theatre, is in its third year on Broadway.

Top botanist dies

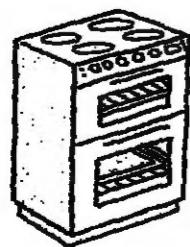
Professor Thomas ap Rees, 65, head of Cambridge University's Department of Plant Sciences, died in a collision with a car as he cycled to his home in Little Eversden, Cambridgeshire. He was one of Britain's leading botanists.

Fire rocks band

The Scottish rock band Runrig were "absolutely devastated" after their management offices and fan club in Aberdeen were destroyed in an early morning fire. Plans to release an album on Monday are unaffected.

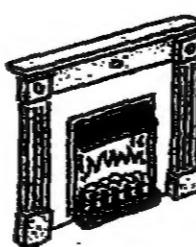


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Women priests bring Church new harmony

BY RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

WOMEN priests, far from dividing the Church of England, have helped to foster a new spirit of reconciliation and forgiveness, according to the early results of a year-long study.

A fundamental loyalty to the Church has meant that even the most hardened opponents have made efforts to overcome their hostility and to be friends with newly ordained women. Less than a third of the 1,000 priests expected to resign over the issue have done so, although funding was set aside to award compensation to them.

Early findings of the study, by the Edward King Institute, a voluntary organisation, suggest that the Church of England may have been strengthened by the admission of women to its priestly orders. One hundred male and female priests, as well as lay people, Church officials and opponents of women priests, were asked to keep journals for a year after the first ordinations at Bristol Cathedral in spring 1994.

The journals were assessed at consultations this week at Trevelyan College, Durham University. The final report is due shortly and the results will appear in the January edition of the institute's journal, *Ministry*.

Canon David Durston, chancellor of Salisbury Cathedral and one of four people leading the consultations, said: "There are many people in the Church who are or were upset about women priests, but who are still loyal to the Church. That loyalty has been a very

important factor in holding the Church together through this period of change. Some people saw this change as disruptive, but now the change has been made and many have experienced the ministry of women priests, they are content."

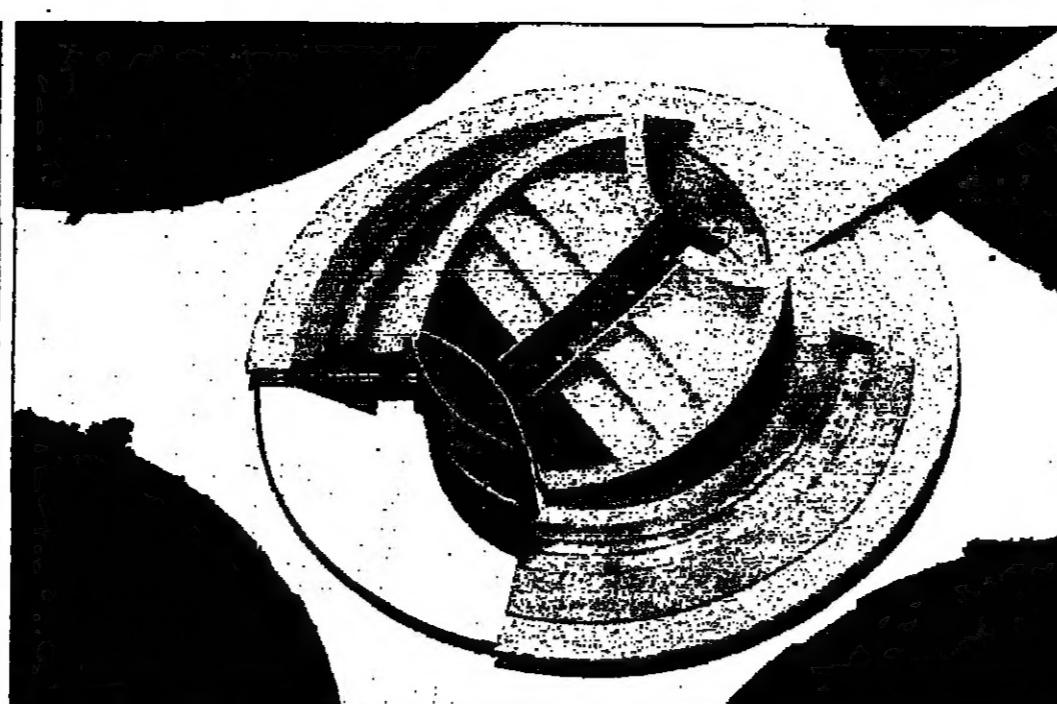
Nearly 2,000 women have been ordained, although fewer than half are stipendiary. This means that, on average, one in six parishes will have the services of a stipendiary or non-stipendiary woman priest.

Canon Durston said: "There has been a release of energy and a flowering of gifts on the part of women priests. For many, the ordination opened opportunities to new areas of service. This has been appreciated enormously by their parishes."

He said that the consultations had produced surprising evidence of affinity between men and women priests. Instead of becoming implacable enemies, these clergy used their Christian principles to work hard to forge friendships, in order to live in harmony with their differences. "We have discovered friendships that are almost deeper because of the divide," Canon Durston said.

He said, however, that the study had found that great unhappiness remained, in particular on the part of opponents of women priests who did not want to leave the Church but now felt "aliens" in what they had once called their home.

At Your Service, Weekend, page 17



The building at the cross's centre will house a chapel, educational equipment and a museum

Millennium 'cathedral' planned to celebrate early British saints

BY RUTH GLEDHILL

A CENTRE for religious history and learning in the shape of a Celtic cross is being planned for the millennium to celebrate the parts played by the British saints, Cuthbert and Bede, in bringing Christianity to England. Funding from the Millennium Commission is being sought to help to finance the £5 million Northumberland Cross "cathedral".

The scheme, submitted to the commission by Northumberland County Council, is one of the most ambitious and spectacular conceived to celebrate the millennium. According to *Church Times*, the building "would form the jewel of a giant St Cuthbert's



The cross is formed by lakes

Cross, with four large lakes forming the arms". The building at the centre of the cross will contain an exhibition, a museum, a chapel and a room for quiet reflection, to be called the Gospels Vault. It will also house the latest in computer equipment, with a live link to schools and other institutions in the area. It will be entered through a sculpted granite podium, and at the centre of the building will be a cathedral-style nave, its inspiration drawn from early church architecture.

The county council has already set aside land worth £6.5 million at Crailington. Visitors are expected to number 350,000 a year. Ken Morris, the council's managing director, said: "This cathedral would have enormous relevance. "We feel our scheme is exciting and relevant to the millennium, particularly with it being the 2,000th anniversary of the birth of Christ."

Credo

Foursquare truth comes full circle

Ian Goodhardt

The end; and then the beginning again.

This just about sums up the Jewish festival of Simchat Torah, which occurs tomorrow. It is the day upon which the annual cycle of reading the Torah, the first five books of the Bible, is concluded and immediately recommenced.

Beginnings and endings are an intrinsic part of life. Life itself begins and ends, and within each life relationships, jobs, projects of all sorts are embarked upon and concluded, often only to begin again. The rabbis, as always, have advice: "All beginnings are difficult"; and again, "It all depends on the conclusion". While the early stages of any venture are especially demanding, as one

struggles to get to grips with a new way of behaving or new skills, the value of that venture lies in what it eventually produces.

There is deep wisdom in these two apparently banal aphorisms. When a child struggles with all the complexities of life, falls down and has to get up and try again and again, how comforting are those words: "Don't worry, all beginnings are difficult." A first driving lesson, the first week of a new job, the early years of a marriage or, more sadly, the early part of widowhood, the new mode of life

which follows any dramatic change; they are all hard, and the wisdom of the ages is there to sympathise and encourage.

But sometimes it is the other way about. The beginning is already a distant memory. What we seek now is some light at the end of the tunnel. When a worker is involved in a large project, lost in the detail with no clear sense why it is worth continuing, those other words come ringing towards him: "There are few points just for trying. It all depends on a successful conclusion. Persistence is the key. Stay focused on the goal you set."

Almost everything in our life begins and ends. Almost everything. For the reading of the Bible, there is no ending. The

urgency with which the annual Torah reading will be restarted tomorrow, only a few minutes after the completion of the previous year's reading, speaks volumes. Human beings need inspiration to help them to complete the tasks life presents, and the idea that anyone should have to go more than a few days without hearing the uplifting words of The Book was anathema to early Jewish leaders.

Ian Goodhardt is Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregation in Leeds

Macleod supporters call talks in Wee Frees row

BY SHIRLEY ENGLISH



Macleod: facing inquiry over heresy claims

A THIRD of ministers in the Free Church of Scotland will meet for emergency talks on Monday to discuss the "shameful treatment" of the Reverend Donald Macleod.

They are said to be angered by the "ridiculous and contradictory" decision of the church's Commission of Assembly to investigate Professor Macleod for heresy. At the same hearing this week, the Commission cleared three ministers of allegations that they had plotted against Professor Macleod, who teaches at the Free Church College in Edinburgh and was cleared of indecent assault charges in June.

The emergency meeting, thought to be taking place in Perth, has increased speculation of an imminent split within the 153-year-old Presbyterian church. The division appears to be between the fundamentalists, represented

and contradictory. Things are serious. There are no proposals for a split, but there is nothing ruled out whatsoever."

Around 30 of the 100 ministers in the "Wee Frees" are expected to attend, including Professor Macleod, 55. He said his phone had hardly stopped ringing since the Commission's decision was made public on Thursday.

"Such following as I have is mainly in the pews, but the brethren have been very strong in their encouragement. The reaction I have had from some is that the lunatics appear to have taken over the asylum."

Professor Hugh Cartwright, one of the three identified by the Commission as ministers who "may have lost the confidence of many in the church", said last night he had never been named as a conspirator nor been involved in a campaign to have Professor Macleod removed from office.

by the alleged conspirators, and the modernisers, who back Professor Macleod.

Yesterday the Rev Alex MacDonald, minister at Buccleuch and Greyfriars Free Church in Edinburgh, who called the meeting, said there was no strict agenda: "No one envisaged that the Commission would come up with anything so ludicrous

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Look at some of the other call centres who are already established on Merseyside: Barclays Direct, NatWest and Swedish company Intrum Justitia. And in other sectors, Ford, General Motors, Kodak and Sony continue to succeed.

So could Merseyside really become the call centre capital of Europe?

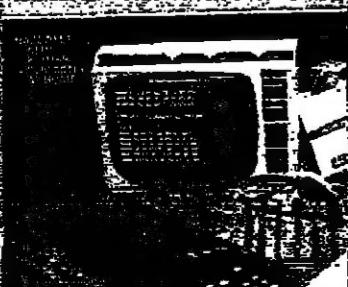
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DAN McDERMOTT
OPERATIONS DIRECTOR, QVC THE SHOPPING CHANNEL

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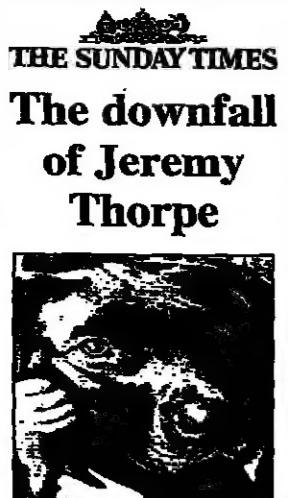
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THE SUNDAY TIMES
The downfall
of Jeremy
Thorpe

At 6pm on Friday,
October 24, Newton
met Scott — the
troublesome

homosexual lover of
the Liberal leader
Jeremy Thorpe —
planning to take him
onto Exmoor and shoot
him. But there was a
hitch: Rinka, Scott's
great dane bitch, was
with him . . .

*Part 3 of the Jeremy Thorpe
story — News Review, The
Sunday Times tomorrow*

Gardens outgrow fitted kitchens in the ideal home

BY RACHEL KELLY
PROPERTY CORRESPONDENT

DEVOTEES of the ideal home have trooped out of the kitchen into the garden. House owners intent on improving their property now add a patio or pergola, rejuvenate the lawn and flower beds or redesign the whole garden rather than install a fitted kitchen according to a survey yesterday.

The Halifax Building Society said homeowners were becoming greenfingered to improve their standard of living rather than because they were planning to put their properties on the market.

"One person's garden improvements could be someone else's garden disaster," a spokesman said. "Clearly our customers are increasingly finding gardening relaxing and enjoyable."

Despite a recovering property market, Central Statistical Office figures show that homeowners are staying put for an average of seven years rather than the five of the

IMPROVEMENTS

Previous figures in brackets	
1986	'94 '92
1 double glazing	(1) (1)
2 improving garden	(3) (3)
3 fitted kitchens	(2) (2)
4 new bathroom	(5) (4)
5 central heating	(6) (5)
6 home security	(4)

1980s boom. Sales hover around a million a year, compared with two million then. When people move less often they work on longer-term improvements such as

gardening. The keenest gardeners are in South Wales and the West, where 40 per cent of customers made such improvements, compared with 17 per cent in Scotland. Those selling their homes saw garden improvements as a desirable extra, along with home security, fitted bedrooms and conservatories. Over half of Halifax customers viewed a fitted kitchen, a modern bathroom, double glazing, a garage and a

garden as necessary features of a new home.

The popularity of DIY is illustrated by the 33 per cent of customers who did improvements themselves; 48 per cent used local firms. Homeowners in the South West installed the most fitted bedrooms and conservatories. The South East had the most — 14 per cent — with DIY as a hobby. Fourteen per cent of them spend their spare time putting up shelves.

Northerners had converted the most lofts, the Scots regarded double glazing and central heating as necessities, Londoners and Midlanders were keenest on home security and the East had the most extensions. Seventy per cent of customers paid for improvements from savings. Only 14 per cent increased their mortgages.

Gardening, Weekend, page 4
Property, Weekend, pages 11, 12
House Style, Magazine, page 83



The water avens, which were found by wildlife enthusiasts in a meadow to be bulldozed for a new road

Discovery of rare plant in meadow threatened by Heathrow expansion embarrasses BAA

By NICK NUTTALL

A RARE plant has been found by naturalists in the path of the proposed new Terminal 5 at Heathrow airport to the embarrassment of the developers.

The find challenges claims by BAA that it carried out a rigorous environmental assessment of the area, wildlife groups said yesterday. The plant, a small meadow species called water avens, was believed to be extinct in the Greater London area and possibly the South East.

The discovery of the colony of *Geum rivale*, which grows to about 3 in and

sports pink-purple flowers, was made near the village of Longford by Ralph Gaines of the London Wildlife Trust and Jacqueline Shane, a critic of the proposed terminal, who lives in Richmond. The meadow is due to be bulldozed for a new spur road linking Heathrow to the M25 if the terminal is approved.

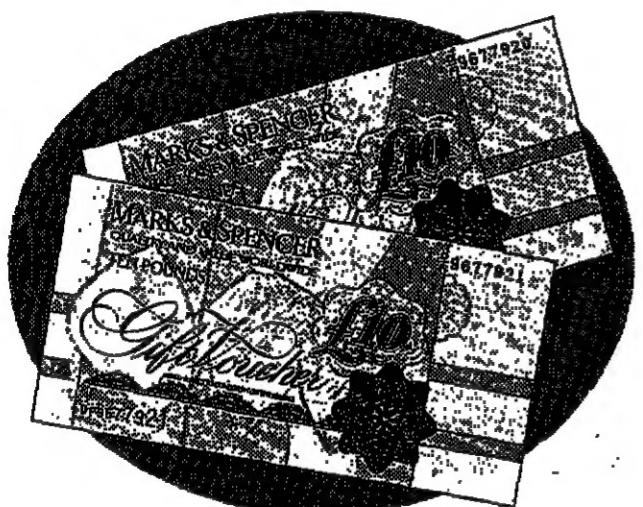
Mr Gaines, head of conservation at the trust, part of the national network of county wildlife trusts, said yesterday that BAA had failed to declare the presence of the plant in its environmental submission to the inquiry.

Cowslips, which have declined in

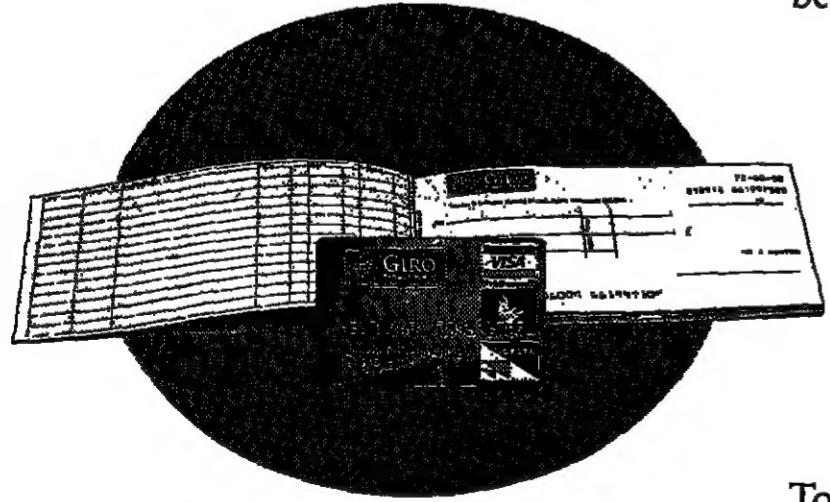
recent years, were also found in the meadow but were absent from the research carried out for BAA by its ecological consultants. BAA said yesterday that it was aware of the colony and denied it had withheld its existence from the inquiry inspector. The road aspects of the proposed Terminal 5 were being submitted separately because it was more a matter for the Department of Transport and a study had begun to find a suitable new site for the plant.

Letters, page 21
Flora Britannica, Weekend, page 28

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**Award for
novelist
on Booker
shortlist**

By ERICA WAGNER

ROHINTON MISTRY, the author whose novel *A Fine Balance* has been shortlisted for the Booker Prize, has been awarded a 1996 Commonwealth Writers Prize, worth £10,000.

Announcing the award in Harare, Zimbabwe, Dr Huayman Khan, director of the Commonwealth Foundation, said the book was a worthy winner in a strong field. "It is a novel of power and conviction that cannot fail to engage the reader with its naturalistic exploration of the painful realities of some aspects of Indian society."

Mistry's first book, *Such a Long Journey*, won the prize in 1991 and was also shortlisted for the Booker. He has become the only writer in the history of the prize to have his first and second novels shortlisted.

Alastair Niven, literature director of the Arts Council and a previous judge of the Commonwealth and Booker prizes, speculated as to whether the Commonwealth win would affect the Booker decision. "Speaking as a former judge of the Booker, I know we tried to put out of our mind external considerations."

Books, Weekend, pages 14-15

**Man held
on Bondi
killing is
given bail**

By RACHEL BRIDGE

THE man accused of murdering a British tourist on Bondi Beach was yesterday released from prison on bail despite prosecution claims that he was short-tempered and had a "don't give a damn" attitude.

Aaron Martin is alleged to have killed Brian Hagland, 28, as the Londoner returned with his girlfriend from a party in the Sydney resort. After evidence from his mother and sister, Mr Martin was released on bail of A\$25,000 (£12,700) on condition that he does not drink alcohol, obeys a curfew from 8pm to 7am and attends regular meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Judge Vince Bruce also ordered that Mr Martin, 22, live with his sister, be accompanied by a relative when he goes out and report to police daily. His mother said: "Deep down he is a kind and gentle person and he has got our support."

The prosecution, which may appeal against bail when Mr Martin reappears in court next month, said that he was attracted to brutal violence and would be a threat to the community if released. Mr Martin's lawyers said that he would be pleading not guilty to murder.

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Labour conference

The time to hesitate is over, Prescott tells floating voters

By JILL SHERMAN
CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT



JOHN PRESCOTT put the Labour Party on election footing yesterday with a declaration that "victory is within our grasp after seventeen long years".

In a barnstorming end-of-conference speech, the deputy leader rallied the party faithful, telling them they had only 200 days to ensure that Tony Blair became Prime Minister.

Mr Prescott also announced that ballot papers were being sent out to the party's 400,000 members and 2.6 million affiliated trade unionists to approve the party's draft manifesto. The move follows a conference vote on the document, which won support from 95 per cent of the 1,252 delegates. It also came after a defeat-free week for the party in which unions and constituency activists presented a united front.

Mixing a strong appeal for unity with jokes about the Tories, he urged Labour supporters and floating voters to get off the sidelines. "The time to hesitate is over. I appeal to you to join us in membership and

families, new hope for industry. New hope for the whole of the British people. We've had enough lies, enough sleaze, enough excuses. Enough is enough. We are united and ready to govern. This was the week when old and new came together — a Labour Party united, a Britain united. A new Labour government."

In a series of gibles at the Tories he called the Prime Minister "Galloping Major" — running scared of Labour, running scared of his own MPs and running scared of an election. "There was more bad news for Mr Major," he said. "They're closing his favourite eating place — the Happy Eater. He's so depressed. The Happy Eater was the only place to take his order."

Turning to the latest allegations of Tory party sleaze, Mr Prescott defied anyone to mention Baroness Turner of Camden, who was sacked from the Labour front bench on Thursday because of her connections with the lobbying firm Ian Greer Associates. He called for the former Tory minister Neil Hamilton's immediate resignation as an MP but said that Mr Major could not afford to lose him as he

was the party's "immoral majority of one".

He went on: "I'd like to ask John Major this: what morality is there ... In one man making £34 million out of rail privatisation, when so many of our people live in poverty? Where's the morality in people being bussed from one hospital to another, begging to be

admitted? Where's the morality in record crime? In record unemployment? Record bankruptcies? Record poverty? All the product of deliberate government policy. That's what I call immoral."

There was an alternative. He urged party members to vote for the draft manifesto, which he said it would make a

real difference to the lives of ordinary people. But it would not be enough simply to put a cross in the right box.

"During the next 200 days ask yourself each day: did I do enough today, could I have done more to secure a Labour victory? Let that question stay in your mind right up to the general election."



John Prescott: "Ask yourself each day, 'can I do more to secure a Labour victory?'"

Archer's flight leaves Tories disappointed

By ANDREW PIERCE, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

JEFFREY ARCHER has ended his role as the Tory party's chief cheerleader by declining any further speaking engagements from constituency associations.

The millionaire novelist flew to Washington yesterday to support Jack Kemp, the Republican vice-president, rather than attend the Tory conference, which starts in Bournemouth on Tuesday.

Lord Archer of Weston-super-Mare's conspicuous absence, for the first time in 20 years, has heightened speculation that his relationship



Archer: rejected dozens of speaking requests

with the party is not the love affair that it was. He flew to America after being asked to help Mr Kemp, an old friend, to prepare for a televised debate with Al Gore, the Vice-President.

His decision has caused deep concern at Conservative Central Office. "Jeffrey is a tonic for the troops and one of our most energetic campaigners," a Tory source said. "I hope he is not offended."

But there is a strong suspicion among Tory MPs that he is. Since the end of July he has turned down dozens of speaking requests. Lord Archer, who friends say was disappointed not to have been

given a ministerial job in the last reshuffle, spoke last year to 141 associations, travelling more than 24,000 miles and raising £1.4 million.

His pulling power at constituency events is legendary. At his last engagement, for Gillian Shephard, the Education Secretary, the room was so crowded that some guests brought their own tables, plates and cutlery.

A chairman of one West Midlands association said: "It's standing room only when Jeffrey comes. He charms people to death, delivers a good speech and we can even get autographed copies of his book. He is marvellous for fundraising."

Now all speaking requests are being turned away with a polite but unequivocal letter of regret from Lord Archer, whose staff say he is "not available". Central Office has received many complaints.

But yesterday Lord Archer insisted that he had not deserted the Tories. "I remain a 100 per cent supporter of the Prime Minister and the party," he said. "I remain convinced we can still win the next election."

However, when asked if he had plans to address any Conservative associations, he said: "No comment."

Next week his traditional role of cheering up the activists with a fund-raising appeal before the Prime Minister's speech will be performed by the former party chairman Lord Parkinson.

Lord Archer's absence will also deprive the conference of its social highlight, his fabled "Krug and Shepherd's Pie parties", which usually attract a full turnout from the Cabinet. He always restricted invitations to "political editors, editors and ministers of Cabinet status", and enjoyed turning away junior ministers.

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Leaders seek to give members a greater say

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE Labour leadership wants to modernise the annual conference to give party members more say in the policymaking process.

Yesterday Tom Sawyer, the general secretary, mocked the present arrangements and told delegates that there were "scores of ways" in which the conference could be improved. "I don't believe that hundreds of people out there hopefully waving their hands in the air at the possible but remote opportunity of having three minutes at this rostrum really does add up to a democratic, conference-making process," he said.

But he was forced to return to the hall later to dispel some activists' fears that the leadership would impose changes on the party. "The only way that the role of conference can be altered is by conference debating and making the decision to change that role."

Senior figures are investigating ways of enabling all party members to have greater influence on their delegates. There is also a proposal to shorten the conference, which at five days is seen by some as too long.

Senior figures agree that drawing up policy motions well in advance will help to avoid the usual eve-of-conference conflict. Mr Sawyer emphasised the need to avoid disputes between the party and a Labour government.

THE TIMES



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SATURDAY OCTOBER 5 1996

Reed considers Bloomberg takeover

By ERIC REGULY

REED ELSEVIER has evaluated Bloomberg Business News as a possible acquisition and has consulted advisers about buying into the American financial information group. The Anglo-Dutch publishing group has stated that it hopes to make a multibillion-dollar acquisition in America. Bloomberg is estimated to be worth \$3 billion and would catapult Reed into the forefront of the real-time financial information industry.

Reed would not comment about Bloomberg and no deal is thought to be imminent. City sources, however, said

that Nigel Stapleton, co-chairman of Reed, might welcome the opportunity to open negotiations with Michael Bloomberg, the flamboyant former Salomon Brothers trader who founded Bloomberg in the early 1980s and owns 70 per cent of the company. Merrill Lynch, the Wall Street securities house, owns the rest.

Bloomberg and Reed are no strangers to each other. In April, Reed announced that the Bloomberg daily market surveys would be available on Reed's Nexis-Lexis on-line information service. Bloomberg and Reed said that they have "formed a long-term partnership in which they will explore

ways to leverage the complementary strengths of both companies".

Bloomberg is the fastest growing competitor to Reuters. It made its name by developing a user-friendly analytical tool for bond traders and its terminals have since become more sophisticated. Mr Bloomberg's empire now includes a news service, magazines, newsletters and radio stations.

Bloomberg has about 53,000 terminals in use compared with the 340,000 at Reuters. Financial information about the company is scant because it is private. Bloomberg had estimated operating cashflow of \$260 million last year. Turnover was about \$650 million, up from \$520 million in 1994. Based on the £12.7 billion market value of Reuters, equivalent to almost five times last year's turnover, analysts said that Bloomberg could be worth \$3 billion.

An acquisition of that size is well within Reed's reach. The company, jointly owned by Reed International of the UK and Elsevier of the Netherlands, has built up a cash pile from the sale of its consumer businesses.

It is not known whether Mr Bloomberg is willing to sell his controlling stake in Bloomberg, or take in an equity partner.

Tempas, page 28

US jobs data help equities to record

By JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

LONDON shares bounded into record territory above the 4,000 level again after surprisingly weak American employment figures which allayed fears of higher US interest rates.

The FTSE 100 index jumped 24.4 points to close at a record 4,024.4. German shares in Frankfurt also hit a new high as American stocks and bonds surged after the jobs report which provided unexpected but clear vindication of the US Federal Reserve's recent decision not to raise interest rates.

The US unemployment rate increased to 5.2 per cent in September from 5.1 per cent in August and the number of jobs in the economy fell for the first time since January — a month when the economy had been abnormally depressed by winter blizzards and government shutdowns during an impasse on the American budget.

September saw non-farm payrolls decrease by a seasonally adjusted 40,000 after a healthy rise of 241,000 in August. Wall Street economists had expected 166,000 jobs to have been created

outside the agricultural sector. The number in manufacturing employment fell 57,000 in September, having risen by 18,000 in August, a clear sign that American industry is losing some steam.

The Dow Jones industrial average jumped 50 points to a new trading high of 5,983.17 after the figures before settling back to stand about 52 points higher in early afternoon trading.

The Treasury bond market surged ahead with the benchmark 30-year bond up more than a full point at midday, allowing its yield to drop to 6.74 per cent. The euphoria in the US bond market split over into Europe where British government bonds posted gains of nearly a full point.

The positive implications for the US economy of what appears to be a spontaneous slowdown in growth, without the added depressive effect of higher interest rates, were not lost on Robert Reich, US Labor Secretary. He said that there was growing evidence that the economy had slowed down to a more sustainable pace from the 4.8 per cent growth seen in the second quarter.

He said he saw no sign of wages pushing up inflation and said that it was possible that unemployment could fall even further than the 5.1 per cent level recorded in August.

Joseph Stiglitz, chairman of the White House Council of Economic Advisers, said that the jobs report was "consistent with our view that the economy is continuing on its path of steady, sustained expansion".

On September 24, the Federal Open Market Committee opted to keep US interest rates unchanged, although many financial market participants had expected a small rise in the Fed Funds rate to help to slow the economy down and prevent any flare-up of inflationary pressures.

Economists at HSBC James Capel said: "The Fed recognised the weakness in the real economy that has developed in the third quarter by leaving rates unchanged in September. This report vindicates that decision."

Markets, page 28

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES	
FTSE 100	4024.4 (+24.4)
Yield	3.89%
FTSE All share	1975.27 (+8.52)
Nikkei	21148.03 (-183.47)
New York	5886.02 (+33.17)
Dow Jones	5886.02 (+33.17)
S&P Composite	689.60 (+8.62)

US RATE	
Federal Funds	5.75% (5.65%)
Long Bond	100.00% (98.96%)
Yield	6.74% (6.84%)

LONDON MONEY	
3-month Interbank	5.75% (5.74%)
Libor long gilt future (Dec)	110.1% (108.0%)
STERLING	
New York	1.5830* (1.5856)
London	1.5831 (1.5851)
DM	2.3908 (2.3971)
FF	0.8945 (0.8103)
SF	1.3680 (1.3677)
Yen	174.59 (174.57)
£ Index	97.1 (97.3)

DOLLAR	
London	1.5800* (1.5802)
FF	5.7795 (5.7258)
SF	1.2558 (1.2557)
Yen	111.61* (111.46)
£ Index	97.5 (97.6)

Tokyo close Yen 111.52

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent 15-day (Dec) \$23.20 (\$23.20)

GOLD

London close \$380.45 (\$379.85)

* denotes midday trading price



Suburban safari: Professor David Bellamy, vice-president of the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, leads a school visit to Well Wood near Bromley in Kent, to mark a joint venture with Nynex, the cable company, to encourage conservation.

Eurotunnel shows banks its progress

By JONATHAN PRYNN
TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

EUROTUNNEL yesterday sent its banks a timely reminder of its rapidly improving operating performance as its 26 main lenders met in London to consider its £4 billion refinancing plan.

Channel Tunnel traffic figures for September showed that the total of tourist vehicles carried on Le Shuttle trains more than doubled to 224,759, from 108,947 in September of last year.

At a four-hour meeting, refinancing terms were put to the 26 "instructing banks" for consideration later. All 225 banks on the syndicate and two thirds of shareholders must ratify them. Details are expected on Monday.

IEA says benefit of EU is marginal

By OUR ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

THE economic effects on Britain if it chose to leave the European Union would be marginal, according to a new study published by the Institute of Economic Affairs.

Better Off Out? The Benefits or Costs of EU Membership by Brian Hindley and Martin Howe concludes that the gain or loss of withdrawal would probably be less than 1 per cent of GDP.

The authors conclude from this that a British government, faced with unacceptable political developments, should not be deterred from changing Britain's relationship with the EU, or even leaving as a last resort, because it fears adverse economic consequences.

Mr Howe said yesterday: "Our clear conclusion is that even the worst case (pulling out of the EU) wouldn't be economically disastrous. If politics should compel the country to go along that line, we shouldn't hold back because of economics."

The European Movement — which boasts Edwin Currie and Peter Mandelson among its vice-chairmen — said the economic and political benefits of Britain's EU membership were both real and substantial.

It particularly pointed out the benefits of access to the single market.

The IEA report acknowledged that Britain could lose out in this respect if the EU were to erect trade barriers on its departure.

Mr Howe said yesterday: "The IEA report is wrong in its assessment of the costs of leaving the EU."

Unless they have German bank accounts, Analysts think the shares will be priced at the middle or upper end of the expected DM20 to DM30 range. Joachim Kröse, Deutsche Telekom's finance director, said that the company will DM1.5 billion in dividends this year, rising to DM3 billion next year. This would give the shares a gross yield of about 5.7 per cent, against a yield of only about 2.1 per cent for the German stock market as a whole.

Deutsche Telekom expects profits from ordinary activities of DM6 billion next year, on turnover of DM60 billion, against DM4 billion this year.

NU acts to halt policy 'scam'

By MARIANNE CURPHEY

NORWICH UNION has launched a top-level investigation into allegations that financial advisers are encouraging "carpetbaggers" to make fraudulent backdated applications for new policies.

The suspected scam follows an announcement that it intends to loan on the stock market and pay each policyholder a windfall of around £500 in free shares.

The inquiry will look into claims that at least one financial adviser, working in the South East, has been encouraging clients to apply for new policies and fraudulently backdate applications to be before midnight on October 1, when membership was frozen.

NU said yesterday: "We take this extremely seriously. In the first instance we will report anyone we find behaving in this way to the Personal Investment Authority. To go to the police we would need to prove that there had been criminal intent." It went on: "If an IFA who normally sends us one or two forms a week suddenly submits 25, we will investigate. Most IFAs are honest ... but there is always one bad apple. We will interview customers and look at whether cheques have been written out of sequence."

The problem has arisen because NU has promised to be flexible over the October 1 deadline, and has told advisers that it will accept "pipeline cases" — applications that had been completed but not processed — up to close of business yesterday.

James Duffell, NU spokesman, said: "We are determined that innocent qualifying members will not lose out ... We do not want their entitlement diluted."

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STOCK MARKET

CLARE STEWART

Shares jump as US jobs figures cool rate fears

THE FT-SE 100 raced away to a fresh record of 4,024.8, as worries over the possibility of inflationary growth in the US were eased by lower than expected employment figures.

The figures reduce the immediate pressure on the Federal Reserve to raise interest rates.

While the markets had been bracing themselves for an increase in US employment figures, the number of people on UN non-farm payrolls fell by 40,000 in September, the first fall since January.

After a morning marking time ahead of the release of the US figures, the FT-SE 100 recovered sharply, moving back above 4,000 within minutes of the American figures being released.

A strong opening on Wall Street, however, gave the UK markets a firmer lead. Shares leapt ahead in mid-afternoon to set a new trading peak of 4,025.1 before closing at 4,024.8, a gain of 24.3 points. With the US figures out of the way, dealers are expecting the markets to open with a bounce on Monday.

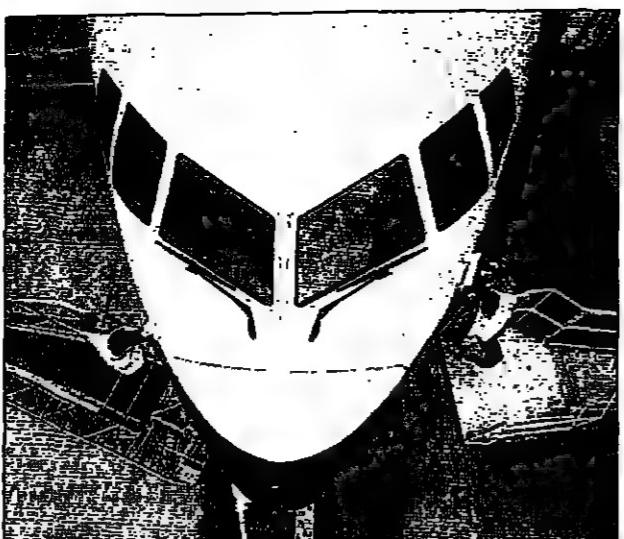
British Airways was the highest flyer among FT-SE 100 shares, lifted by reports that the EU is to legalise trading of the valuable take-off and landing slots at airports.

Buying and selling of such slots is currently done on a grey market and analysts estimate that BA's Heathrow slot could be worth £5-10 billion. BA shares jumped 33p to a new high of 504p. A Commission spokesman said regulations on airport slots were still under consideration.

A profits downgrade from Kleinwort Benson, brokers, knocked Courtaulds, the chemicals group, lower. Year-end profit forecasts have been cut from £160 million to £140 million in response to the weaker demand for viscose, one of Courtaulds' main product areas. The shares fell 7p to 470p, a drop of 3 per cent.

Whispers of a bid boosted HTV, the Welsh television group. Strong demand for the shares lifted its price 32p to 384p. Carlton Communications, tipped as potential bidder for HTV, edged ahead by 3p to 481p.

Bass, the brewer and hotel group, looked flat as selling on the futures market and a stock overhang combined to send its shares to a low of 75p during the day. The price recovered some ground to end at 77p.



BA's shares took off by 33p on a favourable EU ruling

down 41p. Attention on the oil sector was initially fuelled by an analyst's report on the hefty costs of decommissioning oil and gas platforms in the North Sea. Shares in BP slipped to a low of 670p but recovered to close at 687p, up 10p. Shell rose 71p to 999p. Enterprise Oil also recovered at 583p, up 9p.

A sharp fall in half-year profits and a warning of more

Imperial Tobacco also lost some of its appeal after recent buying and slipped back 1p to 410p. Hanson, its former parent, inched up 1p to 901p.

A £4.06 million bid for New Guernsey Securities at 203p a share sent its price rocketing ahead. The price leapt from 200p to 337p, up 137p. The bidders are former Hobson directors Andrew Regan and David Lyons, and their

leapt 382p to 1065p.

Bid interest also added interest to Archer, the insurance group, where shares rose 21p to 821p. The Lloyds agency confirmed it has received a bid approach from US group Charwell Re Corporation.

The Bank of Scotland continued to reap the benefit of recent results as shares added a further 91p to 276p. The Royal Bank of Scotland also moved up with a gain of 81p to 5291p.

EMI, the music group which recently emerged from Thorn, struck a sour note in response to a negative analysis' note. Its shares fell 37p to £12.79 while Thorn eased 3p to 5291p.

By contrast BSkyB, the satellite broadcaster, touched a new high helped by renewed buying interest. The shares topped the 600p level to close at 6061p, a rise of 12p.

BTG, the business support group, was in demand once again, prompting a 212p share rise to £25.12p.

Inspirations, the holiday group, rallied after Thursday's profit warning. The shares recovered to close at 1011p, a gain of 15p on the day.

Airtech dipped 3p to 721p on its second day's trading on AIM, while Oriental Restaurant Group, which also floated on Thursday, was snapped up, sending the share 9p higher to 1971p.

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Filtronik Comtek, the electronics group, moved up 30p to 234p while hopes for new projects and institutional buying helped Ramco Energy, the oil company, to jump 30p to 670p.

GILT-EDGED: After a quiet morning and some profit-taking ahead of the US employment figures release the gilts market also took off in afternoon trading. Strong buying support lifted the December series of the long gilt to close at £10261/2, a rise of 231/2p on the day on volume of 117,000.

In shorts Treasury 8 per cent 2000 ended up 111/2p to £10411/2 while in longs Treasury 8 per cent 2015 rose £11/2p to £102241/2.

NEW YORK: On Wall Street the Dow Jones industrial average surged more than 50 points in early trading on the news that the number of jobs in the US economy shrank. By midday the average was 33.02 points ahead at 5,906.02.

MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):
Dow Jones 5966.02 (+3.17)
S&P Composite 669.60 (+0.82)

Tokyo: Nikkei Average 2114.03 (-103.47)

Hong Kong: Hang Seng 11905.51 (+109.05)

Amsterdam: Euronext 584.05 (+3.34)

Sydney: ASX 2315.5 (+0.68)

Frankfurt: DAX 2683.28 (+6.78)

Singapore: Straits 2146.86 (-1.00)

Brussels: General 9902.17 (+117.38)

Paris: CAC-40 2152.69 (+16.60)

Zurich: SCA Genn 791.40 (-5.00)

London: FT All-Share 1973.27 (+0.53)

FT Non Financials 11.81 (+0.30)

FT Consumer 94.92 (+0.05)

FT Govt Secs 44.92 (+0.05)

Bangkok: 4483

SEAO Volume 705.98

USM (Daxtron) 203.13 (+1.59)

U.S. Stock Market 1,563.50 (+0.02)

FTSE 100 2,391.00 (+0.24)

Exchange Index 97.1 (-0.21)

Bank of England official close (4pm):

EUC 1,2467

ESDR 1,0885

RPI 153.1 Aug (2.1%) Jan 1987=100

NPX 152.8 Aug (2.8%) Jan 1987=100

TEMPUS

Meaningless millennium

MILLENNIARIAN anxiety is taking hold of the stock market. Round numbers have a curious effect on people. Just as the approaching calendar millennium has increased public appetite for stories about incurable diseases and alien invasions, some investors are convinced that the FT-SE 100 at 4,000 marks has been robust, with the yield on the All-Share index down from 3.85 per cent to 3.76 per cent. In fact, the income return on the London market has barely moved since January and the long-gilt yield is about twice that of shares, hardly a reason to panic.

Wall Street, however, should worry. Over the past year, the yield on the S&P 500 index has slumped from 2.41 per cent to 2.13 per cent and the ratio to the long bond is now over three times. Logically, American funds should shift some money to London, but British investors would be foolish to rely on that. One concern is that the market has been boosted by a super-yield from share buy-backs and special dividends. With utility payments coming to an end, the market may drift, but those who missed out on the recent surge in equities will feel the pressure to invest.

Shares have risen sharply over the past year, but, at the same time, dividend growth

has been robust, with the yield on the All-Share index down from 3.85 per cent to 3.76 per cent. In fact, the income return on the London market has barely moved since January and the long-gilt yield is about twice that of shares, hardly a reason to panic.

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AIM

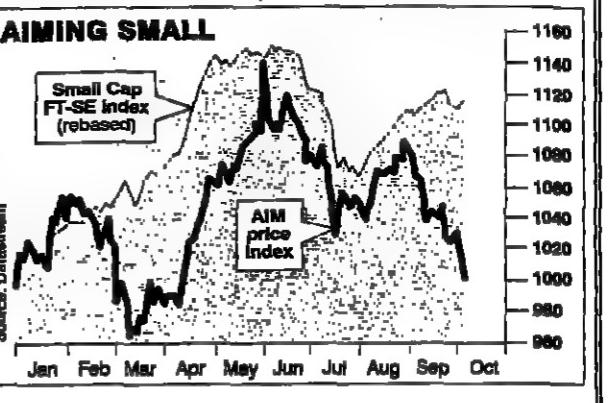
BILLED as a high-risk, high-reward exchange, the Alternative Investment Market has failed to deliver the kind of return investors would expect from holding some of the riskiest stocks.

Since the new issue bonanza in June, the junior exchange has lost over 11 per cent of its value, and is now on course to crash below the 1,000 mark set when the index started in December.

This is not a crash, in the conventional sense, but the result of the market's biggest defect: illiquidity. Most AIM shares are tightly held, giving a handful of investors disproportionate leverage over the share price. Likewise with the AIM index itself: it is heavily weighted towards stocks such as Trocadero and Pan Andean Resources. After recent set-

rises, their combined value has fallen by £45.1 million in the past month, taking the market down with it.

More interesting is the evidence that so far, investors would be better putting their money in the smaller stocks of the main market. The more rigorous requirements of a full listing would suggest they carry a lower



RECENT ISSUES

AEA Technology 3321 + 21
Airtech 721 - 3
Amer Ops U Ltd 95 + 1
Brunner Mond 1691 + 3
Cruden Bay 85 + 1
Deltron Electron (150) 1684 + 1
Elec Retail Sys 1975 + 1
Eurasia Mining 315 + 34
GT Chile Growth 2603 + 34
Groveson Land 154 + 1
Hartstone B 1204 + 1
Imperial Tobacco 410 - 1
Intertel Tel 1741 + 1
Mears Group 114 + 9
Oriental Resurts 1971 + 9
Personal Number 965 + 7
Polydoc 671 + 3
Shallbane 1371 + 1
Ultra Electronics 2901 + 4
Weeks Group 74 + 1

Closing Prices Page 41

RECENT ISSUES

BICC n/p (270) 161 - 2
Data Fin ULS n/p 47 + 51
FII Group n/p (105) 2 - 14
Grampian n/p (125) 3 - 1

RECENT CHANGES

RISERS:

Flitronic Com 2340 (+30p)
BLP Group 1350 (+10p)
Staveley 1990 (+12p)
Bar Airways 5941 (+33p)
Color Go 290 (+12c)
French Conn 2650 (+10p)
Bank Scotland 2768 (+9c)
Rufus-Royce 268 (+9c)
Flexitech 556 (+14p)
Prudential 4680 (+10p)
BAA 4960 (+10p)
Scot TV 742 (+15p)
Wolesey 501 (+10p)

FALLS:

Forward Tech 44p (-8p)
Lamont 230p (-10p)
Scots 548p (-22p)
Courtaulds 470p (-17p)
Webs Blake 485p (-15p)
Bicompa Ind 570p (-11p)
MMT Corp 540p (-10p)
Stand Chart 690p (-9p)

Closing Prices Page 41

RIGHTS ISSUES

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Data Fin ULS n/p 47 + 51
FII Group n/p (105) 2 - 14
Grampian n/p (125) 3 - 1

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Stand Chart 690

THE TIMES SATURDAY OCTOBER 5 1996



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Bumpy road ahead for British Steel

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Policyholders must wait for NU to spring into action

Norwich Union policyholders may have to wait up to seven months to discover exactly how many free shares will be allocated when the society floats on the stock market.

The three million qualifying policyholders will be sent more information about NU's proposed demutualisation in the spring, after which they will be asked to vote on the flotation plans at an extraordinary general meeting on a date yet to be arranged.

Soon afterwards they will be told more about the size of their windfall payout, although the price of the shares they will acquire will depend on market conditions at the time.

Though the average payout is expected to be around £500, investors who have been with the mutual for many years can expect more generous returns than those who, for example, took out a policy with

NU ten days ago. "There are two methods of reimbursing policyholders for their loss of membership rights," NU said. "There is a set allocation for all qualifying members, plus an extra allocation for people who have been with the society for a long time. There is no maximum payout."

An estimated 100,000-plus people have called the NU helpline since it opened on Wednesday morning. Many of these are long-standing NU customers who are concerned that "carpetbaggers", who joined the society days before it announced flotation plans, may be more handsomely rewarded than themselves.

NU acted swiftly to freeze membership, and any policies taken out after midnight on October 1 will not qualify for shares. Around 15,000 people whose pensions, endowments, term assurance or other savings plans mature before the

EGM, or who die before then, will be paid an average 3 per cent cash bonus, which will be added to their policy's value. This would add an extra £400 to a policy worth £12,000.

Richard Harvey, group finance director, said NU decided to distribute free shares rather than cash to avoid falling foul of Inland Revenue regulations.

"We considered paying cash, but decided on shares because the Revenue might regard

cash as a part payout during the life of the policy, and this carries penalties."

Qualifying members are those who have one or more of the following policies in force on October 2 and at the time of the EGM: life insurance, including non-

profit; individual pension; annuity and company pension schemes. However, there will be no payouts for people who buy second-hand endowment policies.

About two million of NU's customers will not qualify as members. These

include motor, householder and other general insurance policyholders; health or medical insurance policyholders; PHI and income protection or unit trust and personal equity plans.

NU will not give guarantees to policyholders on plan charges once it becomes a quoted company. This is in stark contrast to the management of Clerical Medical, which pledged not to increase charges for five years by more than the retail price index.

Now that the NU has declared its

intention to float, it would be very vulnerable if it was forced to remain a mutual, and would most likely become a takeover target. Even if it does float, there are plenty of players in the market, including pensions giants like the Prudential, which could afford to buy it.

Historically, it has been difficult for policyholders to block such proposals. One actuary believes that current policyholders will not be greatly affected by demutualisation but believes that the NU will, in future, be trying to meet the demands of shareholders and may offer products which are less competitive.

He said: "NU rates and charges have been competitive in the past. Recent surveys have shown mutuals often offer better terms than publicly owned companies."

MARIANNE CURPHEY



Larger hedge funds find it harder to cut and run, but the current climate may be tempting

Market mania will not last

THE FT-SE 100 index broke the psychologically important 4,000 level on Wednesday this week on the back of record highs on Wall Street (Richard Thomson and Caroline Merrell write).

The US market was encouraged by leaked remarks from Alan Greenspan, the chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, who indicated that he had no intention of increasing interest rates because there was no danger of inflation really taking off in the American economy.

The UK market is continuing to prosper in conditions of low interest rates and low inflation, but some analysts fear that there could be a fall in the price of shares in the UK market, while some believe that there will be a period of flatness. The movement of the market in the US will be crucial for the UK.

Last week the Dow Jones Industrial average pushed above 5,900, a rise of 150.9

per cent in the last six years without a 10 per cent fall. The previous record was held by the bull market that ended in 1987 after a rise of 150.6 per cent.

Most analysts expect the Dow to climb even higher. "It's plain sailing through the election in November," says David Schulman, Salomon Brothers' chief equity strategist. He is predicting 6,200 on the Dow in the foreseeable future, even though he believes shares are already somewhat overpriced.

But that is the fundamental worry nagging at the market. On most normal measures, US stocks are too high and should be close to a setback. Yet the kind of significant correction that would bring the market back to a safe level never seems to happen.

Michael Metz, an equity strategist at Oppenheimer, calls the current market level "financial mania", yet not even he is willing to predict when it will stop rising.

But the principle on which hedge funds are based can give food for thought in the current financial climate. For the uninitiated, hedge funds are a huge pool of institutional and private capital. They differ from unit and investment trusts in a fundamental way.

These more conventional investment vehicles are typically limited to a certain market — smaller companies, emerging markets. More importantly, they work on the assumption that the value of the shares they buy will rise. In City parlance, they are "long-only".

But betting on a rise is only one way of taking a risk. Big profits can also be made predicting a fall. The practice of agreeing to sell an investment — shares, bonds, currencies — at a fixed price in the

herd is just as likely to charge too far in the opposite direction. Analysts of share price charts try to predict changes in short-term trends by measuring changes in momentum.

A herd often pauses when it comes to a barrier, such as a round number on the stock market index. It took professionals a while in 1991 to gather enough courage to push the FT-SE 100 up through 2,500. In practice, over the past decade, these round numbers have counted for more on the way down. Once prices are established above a landmark level, that tends to act as floor to downturns in prices, as in 1990 or 1994.

Some chartists reckon sentiment is neutral in the UK at the moment, though shares have risen vertically since July. There are other reasons why 4,000 ought not to be too significant. Movements in top shares are unusually varied. Many, including Allied Domecq, BAT, British Gas, Guinness and National Grid are, for one reason or another, nearer the year's low than any record high. So investors do not feel they are in the middle of a heady boom. On a long-term view, too, nothing untoward is happening. Prices were reckoned a little topsy at the start of the year. To reach 4,000, however, the index needed to rise little more than 300 points or 8.5 per cent, comfortably within those actuarial projections.

In this irrational world, the main worry is that shares have run too far ahead on Wall Street. The herd may be turning there. If it does, London would soon be coughing in the dust storm.

Records are to be broken

Share prices made headlines for the right reasons this week. The FT-SE 100 index reached a new record. In doing so, it surged through the "psychological" 4,000 mark. If only to retreat firmly within 48 hours. Predictably, these events sparked in-depth analysis and the traditional ritual warnings. Shares might be overvalued and retribution, in the form of a mini-crash, or "correction", due shortly. That may be true, but should we really agonise over share price records?

In an ideal world where markets were perfect, where everyone knew everything there was to know and interest rates were low, the index should reach a new record almost daily. If actuaries had their way, the FT-SE 100 would rise between 1.0 and 1.8 points each working day, working tediously and relentlessly towards the annual rates of return assumed in pension fund valuations.

These actuarial assumptions, which drive fund management, project future share prices and dividend growth from the long-term real growth potential of the economy, pretending that inflation is neutral. These projections are then discounted back to the present. Rationality, round numbers such as 4,000 should mean little because most investors still trade individual shares, not indices.

The daily record should not be interrupted by such short-term trivia as interest rate adjustments, tantrums on the foreign exchanges, takeover bids, opinion polls, surprise profit reports or monthly economic statistics that are not quite what forecasters expected. Only big shocks, such as Middle East wars,



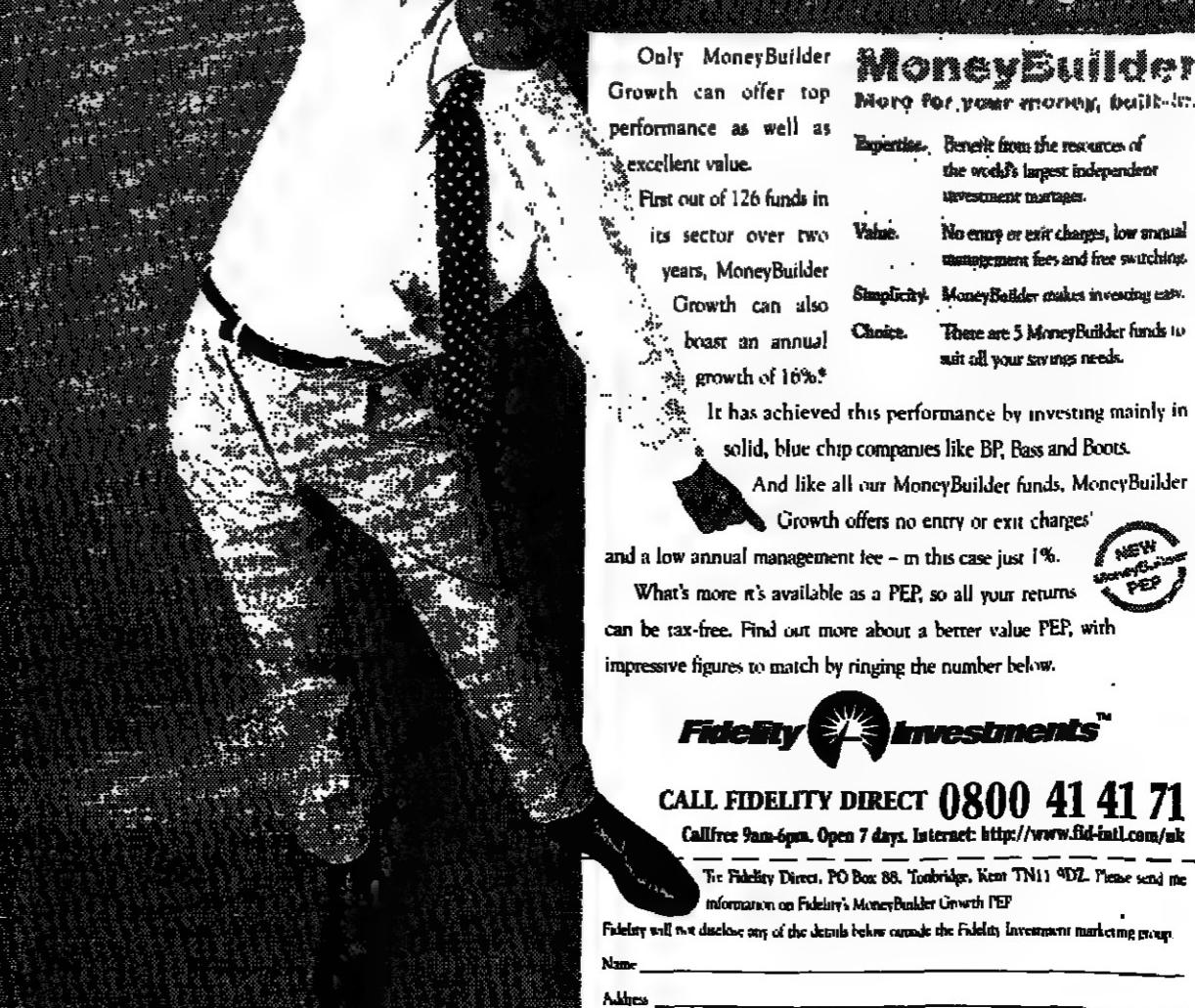
GRAHAM SEARJEANT

that have some lasting effect on dividend growth rates should mar the serene progress of the index.

As any investor soon learns, the real world bears no likeness to this model. Reactions are instant and based on ignorance. Vision is limited and the money cost of time relatively high. Even in a liquid market, only a tiny proportion of stock is traded each day, at prices related to a spectrum of financial assets rather than fundamental values. News that prompts one investor to buy or sell usually provokes the same reaction in others, so prices move sharply to persuade enough to take the opposite view to balance supply and demand.

The trickiest aspect of market movements is momentum, because it often masks underlying trends. The City calls it sentiment. To the rest of us, it is a herd instinct to follow the crowd. In practice, almost all trends run too fast and too fast. When momentum runs out and prices retreat towards a more rational level,

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Amanda Loose on the Buy-to-Let scheme helping individuals to invest in property

Door opens for landlords



Residential property is tipped for investment from institutions and individuals

Lancastrian looks south for home to let

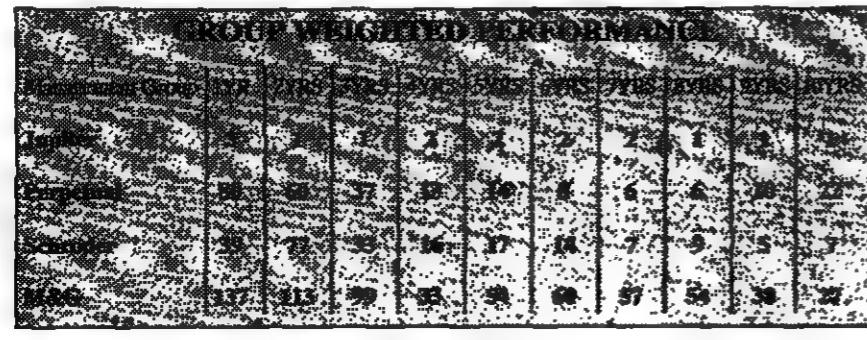
One Times reader, Christopher Rolfe, 36, a surveyor in Lancashire, is eager to buy to let. He started approaching lenders about a month ago, before the scheme was launched.

Buying to let would suit Mr Rolfe. He says: "I owned my own home until three years ago. My house at the moment comes with the job, but I feel that now is really the time to get back into the housing market as it is definitely rising." Mr Rolfe contacted many of the lenders in the area where he lives to see whether they were interested in properties bought to let. But the most he was offered was a commercial mortgage, and several lenders said it was just not their policy to offer mortgages on investment property.

"I was surprised at the number of building societies who just would not entertain the idea. But since the launch of Buy-to-Let, I have seriously started looking for somewhere to buy, and the Woolwich have just sent me details of the scheme. I would like to buy somewhere down South, and have arranged a couple of places to have a look at in the Surrey area," he says.



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per cent gross increase in capital value in a year, this would add £5,000 to the £25,000 originally invested. This would mean that your £25,000 would have grown by 20 per cent in one year, giving a better return than in many other investments."

In recent weeks, a Buy-to-Let scheme has been launched by lenders, including the Halifax and the Woolwich and the Association of Residential Letting Agents (Arla), to encourage more people to buy homes for letting. The new scheme will get rid of surcharges and commercial rates of interest traditionally charged on mortgages on investment properties.

The Buy-to-Let mortgages will be available from the Woolwich, the Halifax, HomeLoans Direct, Mortgage Express and the Lloyds TSB lending group. Their support for the scheme shows a renewed confidence in property investment, says Liz McCallum, director of lettings for John D Wood, the estate agent. She said: "Building societies have changed tack, and now recognise mature borrowers with a stable income, and properties let through reputable agents, as a viable source of business. So now investors will see property as an alternative form of investment, in the sort of market which everyone understands."

Buying to let is traditionally seen as a form of investment favoured most by expatriates or investors with big portfolios. The new scheme aims to gages against tax on the rental income.

The Woolwich has had 5,000 inquiries since plans for the scheme were announced last June. Ms McCallum is also aware of the investment benefits. "Even on the outskirts of London, rental yields are terrific," she says. "If you buy a property for £100,000, and pay £25,000 cash, and take out a mortgage for the balance, the rent will pay the mortgage. And if the property realises a 5 per cent gross increase in capital value in a year, this would add £5,000 to the £25,000 originally invested. This would mean that your £25,000 would have grown by 20 per cent in one year, giving a better return than in many other investments."

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The Woolwich has had 5

How hard does your company pension work?

All company pensions are not alike. A report published this week by Union Pension Services, a pension specialist, uncovered huge differences between the benefits provided by 200 major company final salary-type pension schemes. Final salary schemes, which have their origins in Victorian public sector pension funds, provide pensions linked to earnings.

The 200 schemes were compared in a hypothetical scheme constructed by UPS. Only a fraction made the grade. Bryn Davies, an actuary with Union Pension Services, said: "We did not make the target pension a perfect scheme. We just tried to make it what we feel to be fair."

UPS took into account a number of criteria. When comparing final salary schemes it is important to look at how the benefits accrue. Each year of service will buy a proportion of pension equal to a fraction of the final salary.

For instance, under many schemes one year of employment will buy a pension equivalent to 1/60 of the final salary. Hence, 40 years of service will provide the maximum pension allowable under present Inland Revenue rules — two thirds of final salary.

Retirement age is another criterion. Some schemes allow members to retire early without any reduction in

Employees may not get the benefits they bargain for, says Caroline Merrell

benefits, while others will considerably reduce the pension.

One final aspect of company pension schemes which can be compared is the basis on which contributions and benefits are assessed.

The pension should be linked to gross pay, including overtime. Differences will also occur in the levels of contributions made by employers and employees.

The target scheme against which all the other schemes were measured in the survey assumed automatic scheme membership with a minimum age of 18. The final pension is based on gross salary, and the retirement age is set at 60. Each year of service with this company will buy pensions benefits worth 1/60 of final salary.

The pension increases in line with the retail price index (RPI), and offers death in service benefit of four times the gross pension. Perhaps the most generous benefit offered by the model scheme is the spouse's pension — if the member dies, then the

spouse will receive two thirds of the pension, based on the size of pension before the tax-free lump sum has been taken out.

The survey compared the 200 schemes against this model, coming up with a percentage figure about how they performed.

Only 14 schemes had equivalent or better benefits than the model scheme. The best schemes were offered by BP, Woolwich, Rendall & Colman, Whitbread, Hoover, Granada and Nationwide.

Of the 200 schemes surveyed, 37 offered benefits which were at least 90 per cent equivalent to the model scheme. This group included those offered by Boots, ICI, Bradford & Bingley, Wimpey and Norwich Union.

Among the worst schemes were those offered by John Menzies, Forte, Rendall, Rank Organisation and Express Newspapers.

For example, the John Menzies scheme was deemed to offer benefits that were only a third as good as the model scheme. Each year of service under the John Menzies scheme buys a pension which is only equivalent to 1/100 of final salary.

Union Pension Services can be contacted on 0171 737 0682. The full survey costs £295.

Caroline Merrell is a pension specialist with Hargreaves Lansdown Asset Management Limited, Kendal House, 4 Brighton New Road, Cheltenham, GL50 2AB.

Photograph: Steve Williams

Granada, maker of Coronation Street, has a good plan



TOP RUNNERS

Table shows how some of the UK's biggest pension schemes match a hypothetical model scheme.

TOP 15

Parliamentary Con Fund	12%
BP Scheme	11%
Woolwich	10%
Reckitt & Colman	10%
Nationwide	10%
Hydro-Electric Scheme	10%
TSB	10%
Johnston Matthey	10%
Granada	10%
National & Provincial	10%
Glynwed	10%
Whitbread	10%
Hoover	10%
Hallifex	10%
General Accident	9%

BOTTOM 15

Rendall	53%
BPC Plan	52%
United Glass	52%
Water Scheme	51%
BASF	42%
Forte	50%
Marshall	60%
Sea-Land	50%
Weir Group	49%
NEI Group	48%
Cummins Engine	48%
Booker Scheme	47%
Milk Marque	45%
John Menzies	37%
SUIT's Scheme	38%

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The Disclosure Document contains important information about the HTK Share Plans and the services provided by them. It is available from the Head Office and the Share Plan Manager, 1 Finsbury Avenue, London EC2M 7RS.

Spread the word

Not so long ago no one talked about pensions for fear of being found dull. Now they are respectable, smart even, with some young men boasting of their turbocharged pension plans in the same way that they talk about new cars. However, the message that pensions are important has yet to be universally spread, and the emphasis in the debate remains too much on the state scheme.

Baroness Castle of Blackburn's attempt this week to urge the Labour Party to restore the link between the basic state pension and earnings was well-intentioned. But in highlighting the deficiencies of the state scheme, this pensioner militant diverted attention from the equally noteworthy shortcomings in other arrangements.

In the last few days, as we report on this page, a survey has appeared revealing that not all company pension schemes are equal.

Membership of a final salary scheme, where the benefits are less dependent on the vagaries of share prices, would seem to be the ideal solution to saving for retirement. But the survey shows that members of some such schemes would be foolish to believe that they could contemplate Rolls-Royce pensions.

About 500 people invested £800,000 in units in the Anderson Churchill greyhound syndicate. Alerted by a concerned investor, the Securities and Investments Board has frozen the assets of Anderson Churchill, an unauthorised firm. Now the only chance of seeing their cash returned is perhaps a court case later this year.

These episodes illustrate

COMMENT



ANNE ASHWORTH
Personal Finance
Editor

the risks of investing in schemes — flesh, fowl or otherwise — where no watchdog keeps guard. Before signing a cheque, study our six-point guide (see page 32) to spotting an unsafe investment.

NU plays by the book

INSURANCE companies are not usually known for their finesse. Their relationships with their customers are characterised by indifference, punctuated by the odd bonus statement where the optimistic words contrast strangely with the depressing figures.

But Norwich Union appears to have been dipping into books of etiquette. The terms of the flotation seem intended to please as many people as possible. There will even be a payout for non-profit policyholders, who usually get left off the guest list for smart events.

Health, household and motor policyholders are not invited to the funfair. They may be piqued but they should not be inconsolable. Life and pension policyholders may be about to receive free shares. But Norwich Union has not made any commitment to freeze its charges on these policies after its change of status.

This could mean that some of their windfall profit will be wiped away in higher deductions from premiums. Meanwhile, with the capital raised all are MPs, whose scheme we would all vote to be in.

Those elderly people now struggling to survive on the current basic state pension of £3,180 a year would be pleased if they had had the opportunity

to provide for themselves through final salary schemes. But thousands of today's workers in these supposedly superior schemes still have no guarantee of a comfortable retirement.

It's a jungle out there

INVESTMENTS with a zoological bent seem fated to take a tumble, even when the creatures concerned can show a good turn of speed.

The scandal of the Ostrich Farming Corporation, where several thousand fanciers spent £22 million on birds that may or may not exist, has been swiftly followed by the greyhound tale.

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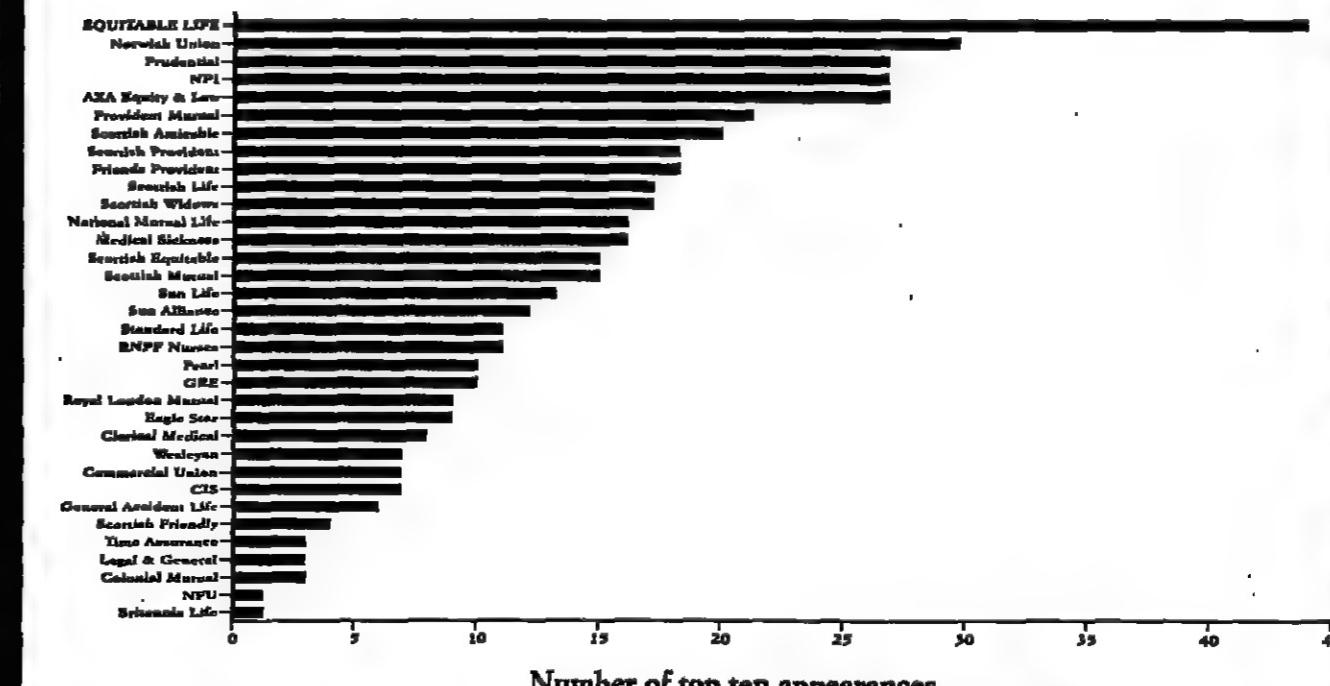
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With-Profits Track Record of Results



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The table shows the number of times a company has appeared in the top ten investment performance results for regular contribution with-profits personal pension plans across all durations measured — according to annual surveys by the industry journal *Planned Savings*.

The Equitable Life has had a top ten placing in such surveys every year since records began in 1974.

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Indeed, The Equitable received a Five Star rating for its personal pension plans in a recent survey by Money Management magazine. So, if you want to feel confident in your choice of pension plan, ask for more information today by calling

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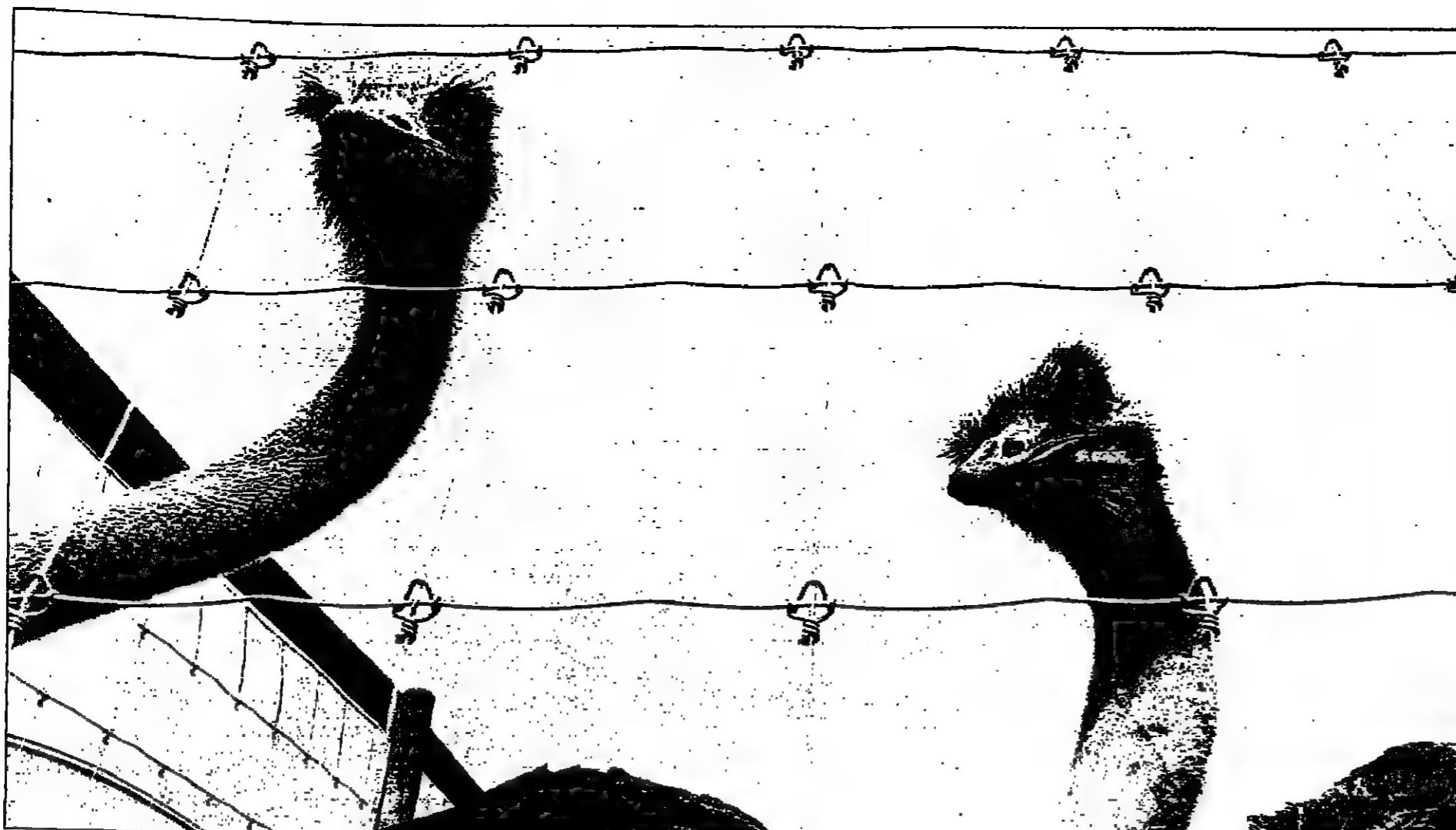
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The sorry saga of the Ostrich Farming Corporation underlines the need to carry out research before parting with your cash, particularly when the scheme is unregulated

How to give dodgy deals the bird

Karen Zagor on taking steps to safeguard your investment

For the 2,700 investors who parted with about £22 million in the hope of making a fortune by buying ostriches through the Ostrich Farming Corporation, news that their money has been siphoned off through a series of US companies is just another blow in a painful saga, as is the report that not all investors' birds have been identified.

It now seems certain that investors will lose a large chunk of their stake. Many paid up to £17,700 for the birds, which have a market value of no more than £400. Those whose birds have been identified now have a choice of leaving them where they are — on a farm in Belgium — and paying £637 for livery to the end of this year, or removing them at a cost of £600. They could also sell or abandon the birds.

One of the most galling aspects is that alarmed regulators had been watching the Ostrich Farming Corporation's activities for more than a year before moving to protect investors. The Securities and Investment Board (SIB) was first to become concerned, but ultimately decided that the company's activities 'fell' outside its jurisdiction because inves-

tors were buying birds, not a financial product. SIB passed its notes to the Department of Trade and Industry, which took almost a year before acting to close down the company on public-interest grounds in April.

As the Ostrich Farming Corporation — and the Alchemy pyramid-selling operation before it — illustrate, you cannot count on the regulators to protect you from a dodgy scheme. Clever operators will always find a way round the rules.

Investors in the Ostrich Farming Corporation were not ignorant or illiterate; many had run their own businesses and had done some research into the company beforehand. Yet they might have been spared if they had paid attention to the warning signs:

■ **Promise of exceptional returns:** The corporation said investors could count on profits of at least 5.6 per cent a year for five years. But if a company promises outstanding returns, make sure it is using compound annual growth, not simply

adding up percentages for every year. If a company is not using the accepted method, it is already promising more than it can deliver.

In addition, financial advisers note that the biggest profits are made by early investors in a company, usually friends, family and business associates. The real money is in spotting the trend.

■ **Unsubstantiated guarantees:** If a company offers a guarantee, find out what is behind it. If it is based on a market performing in a certain way over a certain period and is not backed by real funds, it is not worth much. Similarly, if a company says its product is insured, find out the insurer's name and ask them what the insurance covers. In the case of the Ostrich Farming Corporation, the literature said the birds were insured but there was no underwriter.

■ **Lack of Audited Information:** Investors should always check to see when a company was incorporated and remember that the absence of a track record is not the same as a good

business record. After a company is incorporated, it does not have to file an audited financial statement with Companies House for 18 months. The OFC did provide a balance sheet, but it had not been audited.

Many Ostrich Farming Corporation investors did their homework by contacting business information groups before parting with their money. In at least one case, a well-known agency gave OFC a clear bill of health because there was nothing negative known about the company.

■ **The Hard Sell:** During its last months of business, the corporation told investors that prices would rise shortly. It is never a good idea to invest under pressure. Take your time and do some research. Do not accept the statistics given out — if the figures are attributed to a legitimate organisation, check that it still stands by the information. The OFC quoted research from Dun & Bradstreet in its literature, but the information was many years out of date and Dun &

Bradstreet had not given permission for it to be used.

If you are looking at a farming investment, for example, try to find independent vets and farmers to find out about the animals, their breeding patterns, survival rates and what the market looks like.

■ **Lavish Spending:** If a company is spending heavily on videos, glossy literature, elaborate offices and events it is worth asking where the money is coming from. If it is a new company without the backing of a wealthy parent, the money could be from investors' funds.

■ **Absence of Regulatory Protection:** If an investment falls outside the regulatory framework, it may have been structured that way for a reason. Investments in animals and objects are exempt from the rules that apply to the financial services sector.

Literature does not have to comply with guidelines set by City regulators and, if the company collapses, investors will not be protected by the Investors Compensation Scheme. There are legitimate unregulated investments, but if you are putting money into an unregulated venture, make sure you can afford to lose it.

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Caroline Merrell outlines the odds when hedging on the stock market

ADAM BUTLER



A wrong choice of market product could cost a few smackers, but punters who backed jockey Frankie Dettori at Ascot last Saturday got it right

A tactical bet on equities

Frankie Dettori's unexpected seven-horse win at Ascot last week was a bonanza for the punters. For once they managed to get the better of the bookies, fleecing them to the tune of £30 million.

Investing in the stock market could be as financially rewarding, but as with betting on the horses, it also carries a high degree of risk.

The odds may now be stacked against any further rises in the price of shares on the UK and US markets — as both are close to all-time highs.

Jeremy Batstone, of Narwest Stockbrokers, says: "We do not believe the UK market will

continue to race above the 4,000 barrier. We think there may be a reappraisal on the prospects for an increase in inflation."

"We are concerned that the Fed in America has not yet raised interest rates to try to dampen down inflation, and

think that interest rates in this country need to go up. The market may fall."

Those interested in taking a punt on UK shares may feel it prudent to try to find an investment where they can hedge their bets.

Many financial companies offer products which will give a return linked to the rise in the UK market or other international stock markets, and will also guarantee to return capital if the market falls. Some will even give a return if the market falls.

As with many complicated betting systems, these products can be difficult to understand, and the cost of hedging an investment against falls in the market, could outweigh the gains.

For instance, a product which will pay a return even if the market falls, is likely to capture less of the rise in the market than a product which only guarantees to return the capital.

The guaranteed-style products on offer can come in the form of personal equity plans, unit trusts or life insurance bonds. They are suitable for those with a lump sum to invest and usually have a five-year investment span. Peps have a more advantageous tax position than bonds, and

bonds tend to have higher upfront charges. This does not mean that the bond products should be disregarded — it all depends on the nature of the guarantee, or the hedge.

Most schemes will put a small proportion of money in derivatives to produce a return linked to the index, while the rest of the money is held on deposit to provide the return of capital. Other schemes will simply offer an insurance policy against any falls.

Marks & Spencer and Barclays are both offering

Make sure you are happy over the price for the guarantee

guaranteed Peps at the moment. Both are five-year investments which will track the performance of the FTSE 100 index.

If the market falls over the five-year period then both plans will return the original capital to investors. The Peps have slightly different charging structures with Barclays having a higher upfront charge but a smaller annual charge. HSBC is also offering

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while Sarah Jones looks at low-risk with-profit bonds

It can take time to earn the best rates

The with-profits bond is being hailed as the alternative to paltry building society rates. But be warned, pick your provider carefully to get the best returns, and it must be seen as a long-term investment.

The top with profit bonds, which are lower risk investments, are currently the best alternative to cash deposits. These deposits are now providing the lowest returns for 143 years," says David Aaron of David Aaron Partnership, independent financial advisers.

The latest guide to with-profits bonds from David Aaron shows that the average five-year returns after charges and basic rate tax have risen to 8 per cent, compared with 7.6 per cent a year ago.

However, the report also shows the gulf between the best and worst performers. The best are Prudential (10 per cent net of basic rate tax, over five years to April), General Accident (9.8 per cent) and Sun Life (8.4 per cent). That compares with Axa Equity & Law (7 per cent), Legal & General (6.9 per cent) and London & Manchester (6.4 per cent).

With-profits bonds are

Average five-year returns after charges have risen to 8 per cent

aimed at traditional building society investors seeing their capital eroded by inflation. A with-profits bond, on the other hand, should produce growth over and above inflation.

Mr Aaron gives the example of Sun Life, which, over the past five years, has returned 8.4 per cent a year. Take inflation into account and that is a real return of 5.5 per cent, compared with an annualised building society return of 4.6 per cent.

Until a few years ago with-profits policies could only be bought as regular premium whole-of-life or long-term savings plans, but now several major life companies are offering lump sum with-profits policies. As with other investment bonds, you give a lump sum to the life assurance company, which invests your money along with that of other investors in stocks and shares and government securities.

The return on with-profits bonds is calculated differently from other bonds. The company manages the increase in the fund's value, to even out the rise and fall in the value at different times. It does this by retaining some of the increase in the value so that it can allocate a bonus at the end of each year, even in bad years,



Time can mean money. A with-profits bond should produce growth over and above inflation

and can also allocate a terminal bonus at the end of your term of investment.

These bonds are only for people who recognise they need to invest for capital growth but can't stand much more risk than the building society," says Yvonne Rose of Diane Saunders, independent financial advisers.

"If they can cope with the risk I would suggest unit or investment trusts instead."

With-profits bonds can provide a 5 per cent tax-free income for all taxpayers but higher-rate taxpayers will have to pay some tax on their profits when they cash their policies in.

Basic-rate taxpayers can take any withdrawals free of tax and penalties up to 7.5 per cent in most cases, but take out more than the bonuses have earned and you will be eating into capital.

It is the use of bonuses to smooth out market fluctuations, together with its type of investments, that makes with-profits bonds low-risk. However, low risk also means slow

growth and these bonds have to be seen as a long-term investment, preferably ten years, to maximise growth.

You also need several years to minimise the impact of charges. The initial charge, which includes commission to intermediaries, is usually around 5 per cent. Bonuses should normally be declared net of annual management charges.

"With commission of up to 6.5 per cent, the investment immediately takes a knock. It is only recently that insurance companies have let advisers

them selves decide how much commission to take," says Ms Rose.

At Diane Saunders any commission above 3 per cent is put back into your bond. David Aaron will also reduce the initial charge depending on the amount invested.

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Beat the system with new guide

A new guide from *Which?* will show you how to cut through the red tape. *Which? Way to Beat the System* steers you through the main bureaucracies that govern our lives, from the NHS to the education system. The guide gives practical advice on how to choose a GP or a school and reveals how to enlist the support of your MP on a local issue. Your rights, including those in the Citizen's Charter, are explained, as well as how and when to make use of councillors, ombudsmen and regulators. Available from bookshops or by calling 0800 252100 — price £9.99.

For those thinking of setting up a trust, the Inland Revenue has produced a useful guide to the basic types of private family trust and how they are taxed. The trusts covered are bare trusts, interest in possession, discretionary, accumulation and mixed trusts. The booklet explains what to do when a trust is created and when it ceases. *Trusts* is available from your local tax inquiry centre or tax office.

Self-employed homebuyers often have difficulty in finding the right mortgage to meet their needs, particularly those with a fluctuating cashflow. UBC Home Loans thinks it has the answer. The "Really Useful Mortgage" allows borrowers to withdraw or repay funds without incurring an early settlement charge or further advance fees. The mortgage is also available to those who are unable to provide accounts. For a quotation, call 0645 401400.

Skipton Building Society is launching a second escalator bond. The two-year Step-Up Bond allows investors instant access to 20 per cent of the initial investment without penalty. Fixed rates are guaranteed over the two-year period and increase every six months. The minimum investment is £2,000. Freephone 0800 603010 for more details.

With 57 per cent of overseas UK payments under £2,000, The Royal Bank of Scotland has launched a cheaper way to send money abroad. The low-cost solution — Royworld Budget — is available through Royal Bank branches both customers and non-customers. A single flat fee of £9 is charged and payment will be received within four to six days.

LIZZANE ROSE

GUARANTEED INCOME BONDS

ANNUAL INCOME

Rates as at October 3, 1996

	Investment (£)	Company	Standard Rate (%)
1 Year	5,000	AIG Life	4.65
	10,000	AIG Life	4.95
	20,000	AIG Life	5.05
	50,000	AIG Life	5.10
2 Years	1,000	Premium Life	4.45
	3,000	ITT Lon & Edin	5.70
	20,000	AIG Life	5.75
	50,000	AIG Life	5.85
3 Years	1,000	Premium Life	5.00
	3,000	ITT Lon & Edin	6.10
4 Years	1,000	Premium Life	5.35
	3,000	ITT Lon & Edin	5.35
5 Years	1,000	Premium Life	5.65
	3,000	ITT Lon & Edin	6.80

Source: Chamberlain de Broé 0171-434 4222. Net rates. Income and capital guaranteed. Early surrender. Terms vary. Monthly income may be available.

THE TIMES MONEY INFORMATION SERVICE

SAVERS' BEST BUYS					
INSTANT ACCESS ACCOUNTS	Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Teachers' BS 01202 8877171	Bullion	Instant	£2500	4.80	%/Yr
Allied & Linc BS 0845 228858	Inst Direct	Postal	£5,000	5.40	%/Yr
Bristol & West BS 0800 901109	Inst Acc Post	Postal	£10,000	5.85	%/Yr
Bristol & West BS 0800 901109	Inst Acc Post	Postal	£25,000	6.05	%/Yr

NOTICE ACCOUNTS & BONDS					
Cheltenham BS 0800 1822651	POST-sel 20 day	20 day p	£5,000	6.05	%/Yr
Cheltenham & Gloucester 0800 717505	Direct 30	30 day p	£1000	5.50	%/Yr
Greenwich BS 0161 858 8212	One Yr Term Shr	1 year	£25,000	6.50	%/Yr
Yorkshire BS 0800 376636	Fixed Rate Bond	31.3.98	£5,000	6.60	FOM

FIRST TESSAS (TAX FREE)					
Sun Banking Corp 01438 744505	Fixed rate	5 year	£8,575	7.50	FMyF
NatWest Bank 0800 200400	Fixed rate	5 year	£5,000	7.45	FMyF
Principality BS 01222 344188	Fixed rate	5 year	£1,000	7.00	%/Yr
	Fixed rate	5 year	£500	6.80	%/Yr

CREDIT CARDS' BEST BUYS					
Co-operative Bank 0800 1020000	Advantage Visa	0.64%NC	7.90%N	Ni	
Robert Fleming/S&P 0800 923024	MasterCard/Visa	0.90%NC	11.20%N	Ni	
RB of Scotland 01702 346333	Visa/WorldwideM	0.935%N	12.90%N	£10	

PERSONAL LOANS' BEST BUYS					
Direct Line 0141 249 9966	13.90%E	£112.66	£101.33		
Alliance & Leic Grp 0118 2626262	14.80%	£144.93	£102.36		
Midland 0800 1801080	14.90%	£155.82	£102.49		
No. C = no interest free period. E = Available rate to comprehensive motor insurance policy holders over 22 years. F = Post Only					

* RATES SHOWN ARE GROSS AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE

PLEASE CHECK RATES BEFORE INVESTING

Source: MoneyFacts, the Monthly Guide to Investment & Mortgage Rates (01622 500 677)

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PERSONAL LOANS' BEST BUYS

APR Monthly payment on £3,000 for 3 yrs with insurance

Source: MoneyFacts, the Monthly Guide to Investment & Mortgage Rates (01622 500 677)

SHARING IN FOCUS: INSPIRATIONS SHARES HIT BY PROFIT WARNING

Source: MoneyFacts, the Monthly Guide to Investment & Mortgage Rates (01622 500 677)

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FIXED RATE

Gross coupon Buying price Issue price Minimum purchase amount

Birmingham Midshires 3.375% 102.51 9.137 100.17 1,000

Bradford & Bingley 11.625% 123.03 9.449 100.13 10,000

Bristol & West 13.000% 138.60 9.379 100.20 10,000

Britannia 13.375% 143.08 9.348 100.32 1,000

Coventry 12.125% 130.29 9.282 100.75 1,000

First National 11.750% 121.76 9.650 100.22 10,000

Halifax 9.750% 104.50 9.624 100.22 10,000

Hastings 12.000% 120.76 9.092 100.28 50,000

Leeds & Hold 12.625% 128.27 9.199 100.20 50,000

Newcastle 10.750% 119.17 9.008 100.22 1,000

Newcastle 12.625% 128.42 9.056 100.45 1,000

North Rock 12.625% 139.81 9.020 100.14 1,000

Sheffield 12.675% 138.58 9.291 100.44 1,000

St. George 12.675% 138.58 9.291 100.44 1,000

Tower Hamlets 12.625% 128.70 9.210 100.22 1,000

Wessex 12.625% 128.70 9.210 100.22 1,000

Wigan 12.625% 128.70 9.210 100.22 1,000

Wolverhampton 12.625% 128.70 9.210 100.22 1,000

Worcester 12.625% 128.70 9.210 100.22 1,000

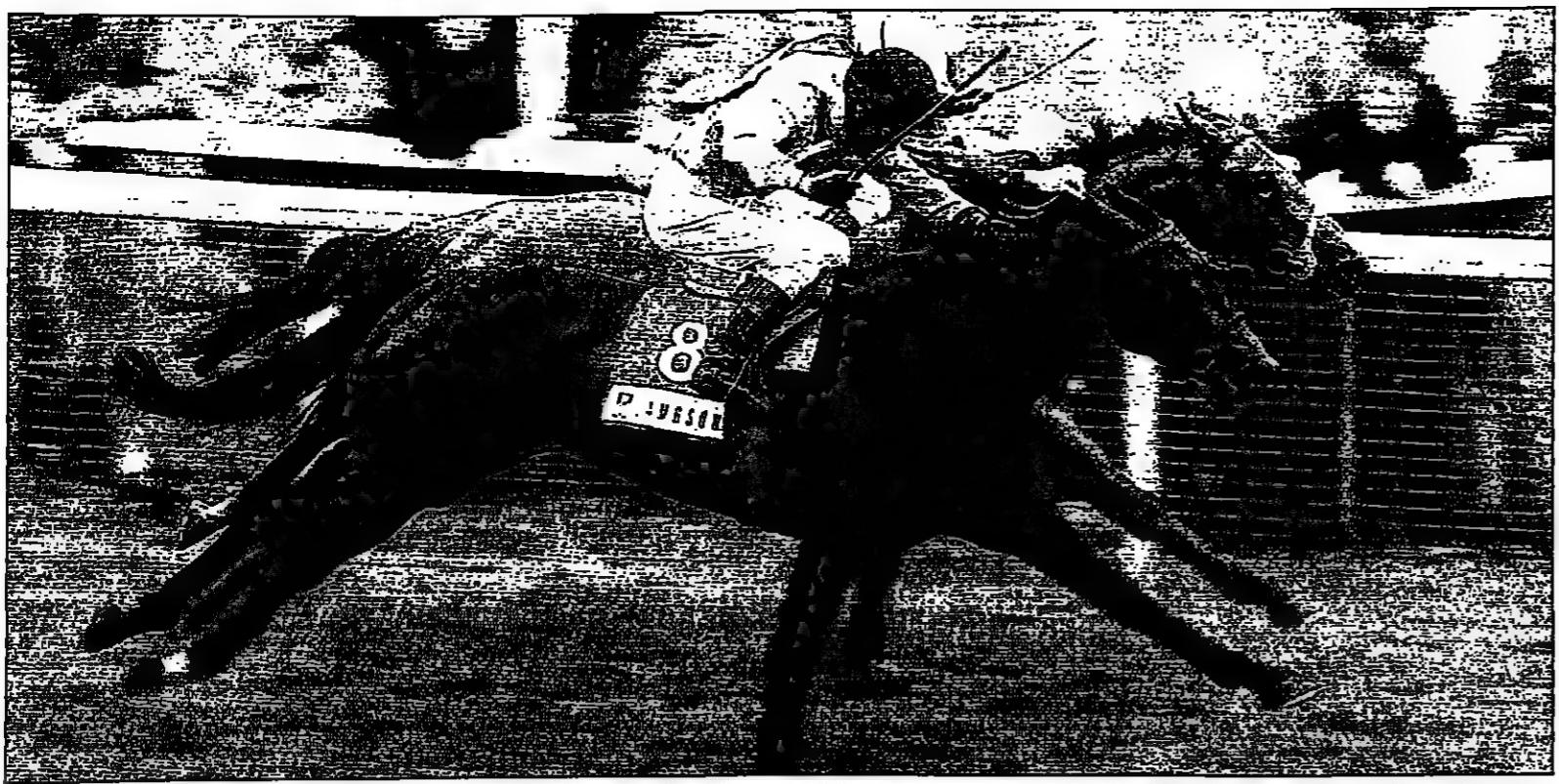
Yorks & Humberside 12.625% 128.70 9.210 100.22 1,000

Zurich 12.625% 128.70 9.210 100.22 1,000

Z

THE TIMES UNIT TRUST INFORMATION SERVICE

UNITED STATES															
AMERICAN UNIT TRUST MGRS LTD	\$171 800 793	100.00	+ 0.00	+ 0.00	+ 0.00	+ 0.00	+ 0.00	+ 0.00	+ 0.00	+ 0.00	+ 0.00	+ 0.00	+ 0.00	+ 0.00	+ 0.00
General Assets	220.20	241.40	+ 2.70	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Graded Equity	285.10	303.20	+ 1.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Global Fund	371.00	387.00	+ 1.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Global Fund Ltd	174.20	190.00	+ 1.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Global Japan	175.40	177.10	+ 1.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
GLOBAL UNIT TRUST MGRS LTD	1023 552 231	100.00	+ 0.00	+ 0.00	+ 0.00	+ 0.00	+ 0.00	+ 0.00	+ 0.00	+ 0.00	+ 0.00	+ 0.00	+ 0.00	+ 0.00	+ 0.00
General Accs	100.00	102.00	+ 2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Capital Inc	102.00	106.00	+ 4.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Global Accs	107.00	110.00	+ 3.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
High Income	108.00	117.40	+ 9.20	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Equity Portfolio	109.00	117.40	+ 7.20	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Intl Equity & Corp	110.00	110.50	+ 0.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Intl Equity & Corp	111.00	117.40	+ 6.30	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Intl Equity & Corp	112.00	117.40	+ 5.20	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Intl Equity & Corp	113.00	117.40	+ 4.20	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Intl Equity & Corp	114.00	117.40	+ 3.20	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Intl Equity & Corp	115.00	117.40	+ 2.20	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Intl Equity & Corp	116.00	117.40	+ 1.20	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Intl Equity & Corp	117.00	117.40	+ 0.20	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Intl Equity & Corp	118.00	117.40	- 0.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Intl Equity & Corp	119.00	117.40	- 1.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Intl Equity & Corp	120.00	117.40	- 2.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Intl Equity & Corp	121.00	117.40	- 3.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Intl Equity & Corp	122.00	117.40	- 4.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Intl Equity & Corp	123.00	117.40	- 5.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Intl Equity & Corp	124.00	117.40	- 6.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Intl Equity & Corp	125.00	117.40	- 7.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Intl Equity & Corp	126.00	117.40	- 8.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Intl Equity & Corp	127.00	117.40	- 9.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Intl Equity & Corp	128.00	117.40	- 10.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Intl Equity & Corp	129.00	117.40	- 11.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Intl Equity & Corp	130.00	117.40	- 12.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Intl Equity & Corp	131.00	117.40	- 13.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Intl Equity & Corp	132.00	117.40	- 14.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Intl Equity & Corp	133.00	117.40	- 15.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Intl Equity & Corp	134.00	117.40	- 16.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Intl Equity & Corp	135.00	117.40	- 17.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Intl Equity & Corp	136.00	117.40	- 18.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Intl Equity & Corp	137.00	117.40	- 19.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Intl Equity & Corp	138.00	117.40	- 20.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Intl Equity & Corp	139.00	117.40	- 21.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Intl Equity & Corp	140.00	117.40	- 22.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Intl Equity & Corp	141.00	117.40	- 23.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Intl Equity & Corp	142.00	117.40	- 24.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Intl Equity & Corp	143.00	117.40	- 25.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Intl Equity & Corp	144.00	117.40	- 26.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Intl Equity & Corp	145.00	117.40	- 27.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Intl Equity & Corp	146.00	117.40	- 28.60	0.00	0.00	0.00</									



Missile, nearside, heads the betting for the Tote Cambridgeshire, one of the season's most competitive handicaps, at Newmarket today

Kammtarra to carry on good work

By RICHARD EVANS
RACING CORRESPONDENT

THE bookmakers' nightmare which began with Coastal Bluff in the Ladbrooke (Ayr) Gold Cup two weeks ago and continued with Frankie Dettori's historic seven winners at Ascot last week can be completed this afternoon in the Tote Cambridgeshire at Newmarket.

Imagine a horse considered good enough in the spring to have entries for the Derby, the St James's Palace Stakes, the Eclipse Stakes and the King Edward VII Stakes, and who after two victories this term is let loose on his handicap debut

with just nine stone — and is priced around 11-1.

If that was not sufficient encouragement for backing Kammtarra, his breeding is out of the top draw — he is a half-brother to Lammtarra, last season's Derby, King George and Arc winner. For good measure, the form of his last race, in which he beat All Royal at Doncaster, has worked out exceptionally well. The runner-up, unlucky not to win the Jersey Stakes at Royal Ascot, won a good conditions race at Bath last Monday by 12 lengths.

The reason for what appears to be Kammtarra's lenient handicap mark for this

afternoon's 40-runner charge down the Rowley Mile is simple. Despite showing sufficient ability on the Newmarket gallops in the spring to merit the host of group one entries, the Zilzaai colt disappointed in his first two races, when he pulled too hard and refused to settle.

The Godolphin representative had his sights lowered and duly opened his account in a Windsor maiden when making all the running to win by nine lengths. However, the key to his chance today stems from his more relaxed racing style, which saw him settle off the pace at Doncaster before bursting clear.

With a strong pace guaranteed today, Kammtarra should be in his element, especially as there ought to be plenty of pace among horses drawn near him towards the start.

Given the nature of this nine-furlong race, there is no shortage of fancied horses and my short-list includes Clifton Fox and Almond Rock (both would appreciate any overnight rain), Angus-G, Sharpcliff, and, above all, Crown Court, who has been laid out for this race. However, Kammtarra looks a smashing bet.

Away from the gaze of the television cameras, a combination of large fields and soft ground makes the Haydock card far from friendly, although the two maiden races do show some appeal. Queen's Pageant (1-40) has run well behind Moonshine Girl at Sandown and Tycoon Todd at York on her two starts. Being on the soft ground loving Risk Me, she should relish the conditions underfoot and can open her account.

Listed Account (5-0) can step up on a sympathetic introduction at Sandown 18 days ago when she lost several lengths at the start before finishing to good effect. Luca Cumani has his string in particularly good form.

NEWMARKET

THUNDERER

1.50 Sarayir
2.20 RICASSO (nap)
2.55 Flame Valley

The Times Private Handicapper's top rating: 3.35 GAME PLOY.
Our Newmarket Correspondent: 3.35 Missile. 4.10 EVA LUNA (nap).
4.45 Polish Romance.

GOING: GOOD TO FIRM
DRAW: NO ADVANTAGE
TOTE JACKPOT MEETING SIS

1.50 OH SO SHARP STAKES

(Listed race, 2-Y-O filies; £9,270, 70 (8 runners))
101 (4) 01 ATTIE (F) (P) (Pedigree) C Simola 8-0 M Roberts 80
102 (7) 10 CASPIFY DANCER (F) (Pedigree) R McNeilly 8-0 7 Queen 80
103 (6) 110521 DANCING 20 (F) (M) (Pedigree) R Hanson 8-0 Dame 80
104 (8) 110221 FERNANDA 41 (F) (M) (Pedigree) Al Kafzari J Danzig 8-0 T Spike 80
105 (5) 210421 GINGER 21 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) J Danzig 8-0 Pat Eddery 80
106 (7) 311121 HANNAH 14 (F) (B) (Pedigree) A McNeilly 8-0 V. Queen 80
107 (9) 110521 SARAVI 30 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) Al Kafzari 8-0 11 Hills 80
BETTING: 7-4 Sarayir, 7-2 Fernanda, 6-1 Dancing, 6-1 Hanna, 12-1 Attie, 25-1 others.

1996: RUZUMANA 8-0 W Carson (11-6 fav) E Hills 80

2.20 NIK SPARK PLUGS PERFORMANCE NURSERY HANDICAP (2-Y-O, 26,576, 60 (16 runners))

201 (8) 144 COVINE 18 (F) (Lay) (Pedigree) D Johnson Heighway 9-7 T Spike 80
202 (12) 3042 THE FOX 19 (F) (W) (Pedigree) B McNeilly 8-0 R Cockers 80
203 (10) 110521 DALMAYN DANCER 23 (F) (M) (Pedigree) B McNeilly 8-0 M Tebbit 80
204 (6) 110521 BURLINGTON HOUSE 22 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) C Poole 8-0 A McNeilly 80
205 (5) 519021 SAINT HENRY 61 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) J Farchane 8-0 D-Hansen 80
206 (11) 021121 SHARPSHOOTER 21 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) Pat Eddery 80
207 (7) 110521 STYLISH 20 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) A McNeilly 8-0 V. Queen 80
208 (4) 110521 STYLMAN 12 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) A McNeilly 8-0 11 Hills 80
209 (3) 1001 A BREZZ 40 (F) (Glossary) Sadiq 8-0 N Day 80
210 (14) 110521 KASHER KACHE 23 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) K McNeilly 8-0 B Dayle 80
211 (10) 021121 SAINT HENRY 25 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) W Gammie 8-0 Emma O'Gorman 80
212 (11) 110521 STYLISH 21 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) A McNeilly 8-0 R Hansen 80
213 (1) 110521 MYSTIC CIRCLE 24 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) J Farchane 8-0 R Hansen 80
214 (7) 032222 MARSDA 40 (M) (Pedigree) M McNeilly 8-0 R Hansen 80
215 (5) 230322 RICASSO 42 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) M McNeilly 8-0 D-Hansen 80
216 (16) 005021 HOMESTEAD 15 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) R Hanson 7-12 J Queen 80
BETTING: 5-1 Styman, 7-1 Stylish, 6-1 Dancing, 6-1 Hanna, 6-1 Stylish, 12-1 others.
1996: KING OF PERU 9-3 J Tait (1-1) A Jenkins 10 ran

2.55 SUN CHARIOT STAKES (Group I: fillies and mares; 1m 2f (9 runners))

201 (2) 13-1821 SPOUT 82 (C,D,G,S) (Lady Rothschild) R Charlton 4-13 Pat Eddery 80
202 (1) 110521 TOTEM 20 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) A McNeilly 8-0 11 Hills 80
203 (3) 230220 BMT SALSAIR 20 (C,F,D) (Hamlet Al Maktoum) J Danzig 4-13 R Hansen 80
204 (5) 201421 FLAME DASH 20 (D,F,B) (Chester Park Stud) M Stoute 3-8-0 K Fallon 80
205 (7) 110521 STYLISH 20 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) A McNeilly 8-0 11 Hills 80
206 (8) 200602 BILLY BLUFF 20 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) R Hanson 4-13 D-Hansen 80
207 (9) 060620 TERTIUM 15 (F) (M) (Pedigree) M McNeilly 8-0 11 Hills 80
208 (10) 110521 STAR MANIA 24 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) A McNeilly 8-0 11 Hills 80
209 (11) 110521 SUN CHARIOT 20 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) A McNeilly 8-0 11 Hills 80
210 (12) 110521 SUN CHARIOT 20 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) A McNeilly 8-0 11 Hills 80
211 (13) 110521 SUN CHARIOT 20 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) A McNeilly 8-0 11 Hills 80
212 (14) 110521 SUN CHARIOT 20 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) A McNeilly 8-0 11 Hills 80
213 (15) 110521 SUN CHARIOT 20 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) A McNeilly 8-0 11 Hills 80
214 (16) 110521 SUN CHARIOT 20 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) A McNeilly 8-0 11 Hills 80
215 (17) 110521 SUN CHARIOT 20 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) A McNeilly 8-0 11 Hills 80
216 (18) 110521 SUN CHARIOT 20 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) A McNeilly 8-0 11 Hills 80
217 (19) 110521 SUN CHARIOT 20 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) A McNeilly 8-0 11 Hills 80
218 (20) 110521 SUN CHARIOT 20 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) A McNeilly 8-0 11 Hills 80
219 (21) 110521 SUN CHARIOT 20 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) A McNeilly 8-0 11 Hills 80
220 (22) 110521 SUN CHARIOT 20 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) A McNeilly 8-0 11 Hills 80
221 (23) 110521 SUN CHARIOT 20 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) A McNeilly 8-0 11 Hills 80
222 (24) 110521 SUN CHARIOT 20 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) A McNeilly 8-0 11 Hills 80
223 (25) 110521 SUN CHARIOT 20 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) A McNeilly 8-0 11 Hills 80
224 (26) 110521 SUN CHARIOT 20 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) A McNeilly 8-0 11 Hills 80
225 (27) 110521 SUN CHARIOT 20 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) A McNeilly 8-0 11 Hills 80
226 (28) 110521 SUN CHARIOT 20 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) A McNeilly 8-0 11 Hills 80
227 (29) 110521 SUN CHARIOT 20 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) A McNeilly 8-0 11 Hills 80
228 (30) 110521 SUN CHARIOT 20 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) A McNeilly 8-0 11 Hills 80
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237 (39) 110521 SUN CHARIOT 20 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) A McNeilly 8-0 11 Hills 80
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239 (41) 110521 SUN CHARIOT 20 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) A McNeilly 8-0 11 Hills 80
240 (42) 110521 SUN CHARIOT 20 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) A McNeilly 8-0 11 Hills 80
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285 (87) 110521 SUN CHARIOT 20 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) A McNeilly 8-0 11 Hills 80
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296 (98) 110521 SUN CHARIOT 20 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) A McNeilly 8-0 11 Hills 80
297 (99) 110521 SUN CHARIOT 20 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) A McNeilly 8-0 11 Hills 80
298 (100) 110521 SUN CHARIOT 20 (D,F,B) (Pedigree) A McNeilly 8-0 11 Hills 80
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THE TIMES SATURDAY OCTOBER 5 1996

LONGCHAMP

GOING: SOFT

2.00 PRIX DE ROYALLIEU

(Group II) £39,526 1m (116yd) (11 runners)

1. 50-6141 BLUE WATER (5s) (des R Phillips) J Harrold 4-3-1
2. 506121 KASSEM (7s) (des R Phillips) J Harrold 4-3-1
3. 1515 TAKADOU (5s) (des R Phillips) D Separovic 4-3-1
4. 502511 HANAYAMA (5t) (des R Phillips) J Harrold 3-3-1
5. 24 HARAYAMA (5t) (des R Phillips) J Harrold 3-3-1
6. 1-36215 ZAFRA (20 f) (H) M Agius, J Cottrell 3-3-1
7. 3-1355 ANNAHA (18 f) (des R Phillips) J Harrold 3-3-1
8. 1-3013 SPANISH FLIES (14 s) (des R Phillips) J Harrold 3-3-1
9. 1-2845 WILDE LADY (14 f) (des R Phillips) J Harrold 3-3-1
10. 1-0363 MEZDUGORJE (15 f) (des R Phillips) J Harrold 3-3-1
11. 504183 TRULY GENEROUS (6 s) (des R Phillips) J Harrold 3-3-1
12. 17 CAMPORSE (62 s) (des R Phillips) J Harrold 3-3-1
13. 31 OTANI (27 f) (des R Phillips) J Harrold 3-3-1
BETTING: 9-4 Zafra, Hanayama (coupled), 3-1 Blue Water, Abcrosco (coupled), 9-2 Corporate, 8-1 Azores, Space, Flies, 6-1 Zafra, 5-1 Annaha, 4-1 Kassem, 10-1 Voula, 10-1 Voula, 10-1 others

BBC1

HAYDOCK PARK

GOING: SOFT
DRAW: 5F-6F, HIGH NUMBERS BEST

1.40 WALNUT MAIDEN STAKES

(2-4-D, £3,485 120 runners)

1. 6540 FTIMES (6s) F. Fossay 9-0
2. 2203 FRUITANA (5s) F. Fossay 9-0
3. 2100 HYDE PARK (5s) F. Fossay 9-0
4. 6520 SPARKLING HARRY (29 Mon) S. McLean 9-0
5. 1020 TORONTO (10 f) F. Fossay 9-0
6. 03 0503 MOTAN QUEEN (8f) R. Hetherell 9-0
7. 03 0504 PINKY (8f) R. Hetherell 9-0
8. 03 0505 SPARKLING COAST (30 f) S. McLean 9-0
9. 4203 RUBY TUESDAY (28 f) S. McLean 9-0
10. 5000 SAVONA (5s) R. Hetherell 9-0
11. 5001 NARROW (5s) R. Hetherell 9-0
12. 5002 BATTLE GROUND (17 f) S. McLean 9-0
13. 5003 MISS ALICE (17 f) S. McLean 9-0
14. 5004 CHAMPAGNE (28 f) S. McLean 9-0
15. 5005 RUMBLE (28 f) S. McLean 9-0
16. 5006 BATTLE GROUP (28 f) S. McLean 9-0
17. 5007 BATTLE CLONES (16 f) S. McLean 9-0
18. 5008 OPALETTA (21 f) Lady Henrie 6-1
19. 5009 CLOUTIER (21 f) Lady Henrie 6-1
20. 5010 MILORD SOUND (14 f) P. Fossay 9-0
21. 5011 ALAMANDER (9s) P. Fossay 9-0
22. 5012 CLAWSON (14 f) P. Fossay 9-0
23. 5013 BATTLE CLONES (16 f) P. Fossay 9-0
24. 5014 BATTLE GROUP (28 f) P. Fossay 9-0
25. 5015 BATTLE CLONES (16 f) P. Fossay 9-0
26. 5016 BATTLE GROUP (28 f) P. Fossay 9-0
27. 5017 BATTLE CLONES (16 f) P. Fossay 9-0
28. 5018 BATTLE GROUP (28 f) P. Fossay 9-0
29. 5019 BATTLE CLONES (16 f) P. Fossay 9-0
30. 5020 BATTLE GROUP (28 f) P. Fossay 9-0
31. 5021 BATTLE CLONES (16 f) P. Fossay 9-0
32. 5022 BATTLE GROUP (28 f) P. Fossay 9-0
33. 5023 BATTLE CLONES (16 f) P. Fossay 9-0
34. 5024 BATTLE GROUP (28 f) P. Fossay 9-0
35. 5025 BATTLE CLONES (16 f) P. Fossay 9-0
36. 5026 BATTLE GROUP (28 f) P. Fossay 9-0
37. 5027 BATTLE CLONES (16 f) P. Fossay 9-0
38. 5028 BATTLE GROUP (28 f) P. Fossay 9-0
39. 5029 BATTLE CLONES (16 f) P. Fossay 9-0
40. 5030 BATTLE GROUP (28 f) P. Fossay 9-0
41. 5031 BATTLE CLONES (16 f) P. Fossay 9-0
42. 5032 BATTLE GROUP (28 f) P. Fossay 9-0
43. 5033 BATTLE CLONES (16 f) P. Fossay 9-0
44. 5034 BATTLE GROUP (28 f) P. Fossay 9-0
45. 5035 BATTLE CLONES (16 f) P. Fossay 9-0
46. 5036 BATTLE GROUP (28 f) P. Fossay 9-0
47. 5037 BATTLE CLONES (16 f) P. Fossay 9-0
48. 5038 BATTLE GROUP (28 f) P. Fossay 9-0
49. 5039 BATTLE CLONES (16 f) P. Fossay 9-0
50. 5040 BATTLE GROUP (28 f) P. Fossay 9-0
51. 5041 BATTLE CLONES (16 f) P. Fossay 9-0
52. 5042 BATTLE GROUP (28 f) P. Fossay 9-0
53. 5043 BATTLE CLONES (16 f) P. Fossay 9-0
54. 5044 BATTLE GROUP (28 f) P. Fossay 9-0
55. 5045 BATTLE CLONES (16 f) P. Fossay 9-0
56. 5046 BATTLE GROUP (28 f) P. Fossay 9-0
57. 5047 BATTLE CLONES (16 f) P. Fossay 9-0
58. 5048 BATTLE GROUP (28 f) P. Fossay 9-0
59. 5049 BATTLE CLONES (16 f) P. Fossay 9-0
60. 5050 BATTLE GROUP (28 f) P. Fossay 9-0
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67. 5057 BATTLE CLONES (16 f) P. Fossay 9-0
68. 5058 BATTLE GROUP (28 f) P. Fossay 9-0
69. 5059 BATTLE CLONES (16 f) P. Fossay 9-0
70. 5060 BATTLE GROUP (28 f) P. Fossay 9-0
71. 5061 BATTLE CLONES (16 f) P. Fossay 9-0
72. 5062 BATTLE GROUP (28 f) P. Fossay 9-0
73. 5063 BATTLE CLONES (16 f) P. Fossay 9-0
74. 5064 BATTLE GROUP (28 f) P. Fossay 9-0
75. 5065 BATTLE CLONES (16 f) P. Fossay 9-0
76. 5066 BATTLE GROUP (28 f) P. Fossay 9-0
77. 5067 BATTLE CLONES (16 f) P. Fossay 9-0
78. 5068 BATTLE GROUP (28 f) P. Fossay 9-0
79. 5069 BATTLE CLONES (16 f) P. Fossay 9-0
80. 5070 BATTLE GROUP (28 f) P. Fossay 9-0
81. 5071 BATTLE CLONES (16 f) P. Fossay 9-0
82. 5072 BATTLE GROUP (28 f) P. Fossay 9-0
83. 5073 BATTLE CLONES (16 f) P. Fossay 9-0
84. 5074 BATTLE GROUP (28 f) P. Fossay 9-0
85. 5075 BATTLE CLONES (16 f) P. Fossay 9-0
86. 5076 BATTLE GROUP (28 f) P. Fossay 9-0
87. 5077 BATTLE CLONES (16 f) P. Fossay 9-0
88. 5078 BATTLE GROUP (28 f) P. Fossay 9-0
89. 5079 BATTLE CLONES (16 f) P. Fossay 9-0
90. 5080 BATTLE GROUP (28 f) P. Fossay 9-0
91. 5081 BATTLE CLONES (16 f) P. Fossay 9-0
92. 5082 BATTLE GROUP (28 f) P. Fossay 9-0
93. 5083 BATTLE CLONES (16 f) P. Fossay 9-0
94. 5084 BATTLE GROUP (28 f) P. Fossay 9-0
95. 5085 BATTLE CLONES (16 f) P. Fossay 9-0
96. 5086 BATTLE GROUP (28 f) P. Fossay 9-0
97. 5087 BATTLE CLONES (16 f) P. Fossay 9-0
98. 5088 BATTLE GROUP (28 f) P. Fossay 9-0
99. 5089 BATTLE CLONES (16 f) P. Fossay 9-0
100. 5090 BATTLE GROUP (28 f) P. Fossay 9-0
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RACING: TOMORROW'S PROGRAMMES AT HOME AND ABROAD

Swain to make stamina tell

BY JULIAN MUSCAT

SWAIN, who has made discernible physical progress over the last 12 months, has the right attributes to give André Fabre his fourth triumph in the last ten runnings of the Forte Meridien Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe (2.50) at Longchamp tomorrow.

Since he fought his way into third place 12 months ago, Swain has been aimed at this race to the exclusion of all others. The son of Nashwan bypassed the King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Diamond Stakes when the ground came up fast. And his convincing Prix Foy defeat of Pentire should have primed him for the effort of his life. Furthermore, this year's renewal is not laced with the quality of 12 months ago.

Before the rains, Fabre was adamant Pentire would not reverse the Prix Foy verdict. Those rains have surely erased Pentire's chance; this year's running favours the hard of heart over the fleet of foot. Swain showed heart when thrown to the wolves in Paris last year. He forfeited ground by running wide throughout, a tactic partially employed to offset his relative inexperience. He now needs no such considerations.

The four-year-old is best when

racing prominently, and his proven stamina should set him galloping right to the wire. With Helios and Classic Cliche also inclined to keep close tabs on the race, there should certainly be no loitering.

Helios is very much the wild card — or just plain wild if judged on his headstrong performance in the Prix du Jockey-Club. However, that is one blot on an otherwise

behind Helios in the Prix Nicl last time out, would have better prospects on a sound surface. The same applies to Oscar Schindler, Radvore and Shaamit. Polaris Flight has become disappointing and Tamure lacks a recent run, while Luna Wells, Le Destin, Leonidas and Leads are long-shot odds on the longest order. Their connections will be praying for the lottery of an autumnal quagmire.

Classic Cliche would thrive in a quagmire and would be a most deserving winner, having tackled Ascot's twin peaks, the Gold Cup and King George, on his last two starts. The speed he showed in the latter contest was startling to say the least.

Classic Cliche's interrupted preparation came as a cruel blow to connections, who have acknowledged the disadvantage just when everything else was conspiring in the horse's favour. Nevertheless, if anywhere near his best, he has real prospects of disputing the finish.

That leaves Zagreb and Pilsudski, both of whom should act on the ground. Zagreb is an enigma. An inexperienced colt, he has been off since running away with the Irish Derby three months ago. Dermot Weld, his trainer, will ensure he lacks nothing in fitness, but the Theatrical colt faces a

formidable task. Pilsudski is preferred for a minor berth. Rugged and improving in equal measure, he should thrive on the bustle.

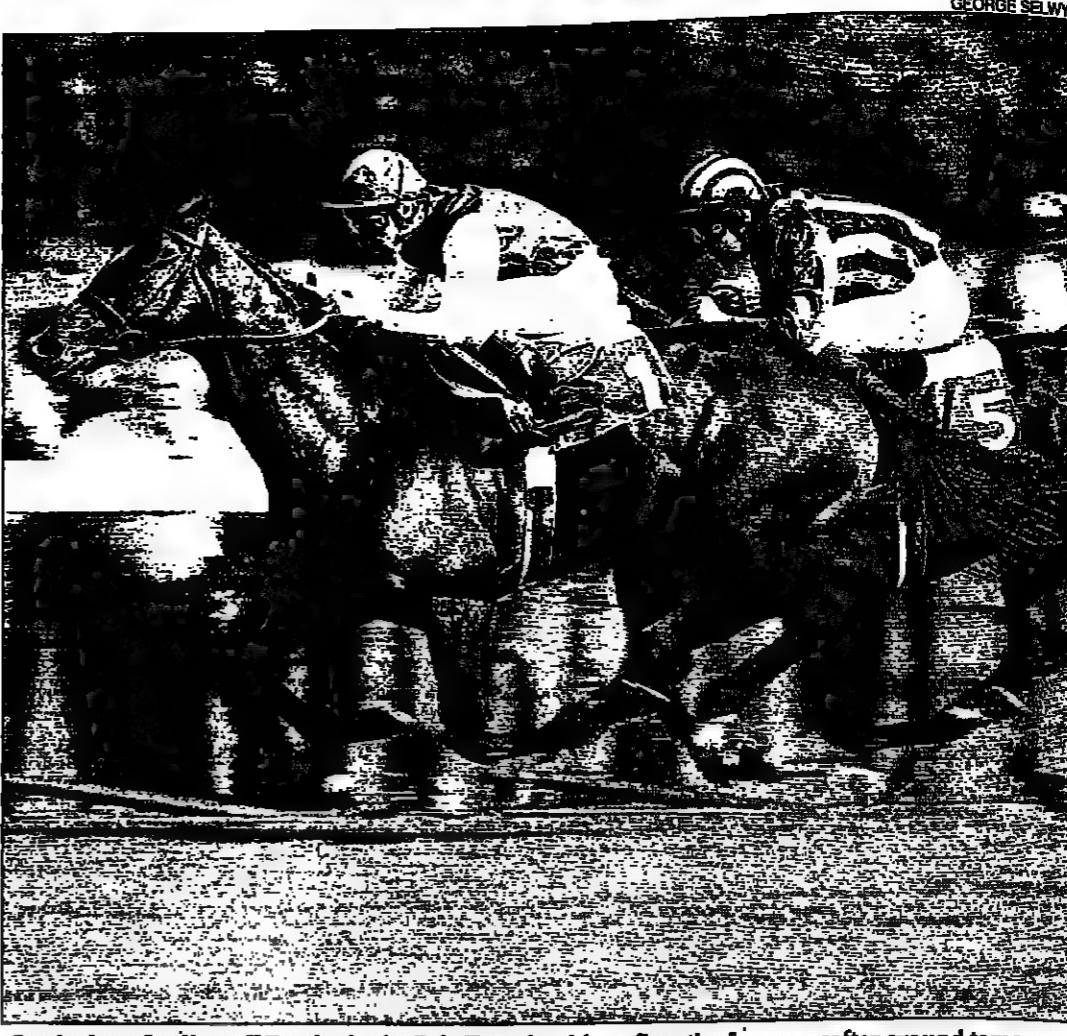
In stark contrast to the Arc, the Prix d'Abbaye de Longchamp (1.30) rewards those of speedy inheritance. Remarkably, it was Alec Head who last won the sprint for France with Sigy 18 years ago.

RICHARD EVANS

Nap: MONTSERRAT
(3.10 Haydock Park)
Next best: Potemkin
(1.30 Haydock Park)

But Alec's daughter, Criquette, looks poised to end the unhappy sequence with Anabaa, who remains unextended in six outings this season.

So strong is Britain's challenge for the Prix Marcel Boussac (2.05) that the prize looks destined for export. Somewhat curiously for a daughter of Danzig, Yashmak has been waiting for this ground. However, Bianca Nera appeals as one who should be followed until beaten, having already shown a willingness to travel when landing the Moyglare Stud Stakes in Ireland last month.



Swain, here fending off Pentire in the Prix Foy, should confirm the form on softer ground tomorrow

BIG-RACE FIELD

2.50 FORTE MERIDIEN PRIX DE L'ARC DE TRIOMPHE

BBC2

(Group 1: £527,009 1m 4f (16 runners))

- 1 121 SWAIN 21 (C.G.) Ghislain Marmontell A Hahn 4-6-5 ... T James 94
(b/c Nashwan - Love Stricken) (Mare, good, white sleeves, maroon cap, white star)
2 144 TAMURE 24 (D.F.) Ghislain Marmontell A Hahn 5-8-6 ... F Head
(b/c Sader's Web - Three Tasty) (Mare, white sleeves, maroon cap, white star)
3 122 -112 CLASSIC CLOCHE 7 (I) Godolphin S Bin Sizor 10-11 ... L Dutton 96
(b/c Salter - Panel) (Filly, grey)

4 (11) 114 OSCAR SCHINDLER 10 (D.F.G.) S Ascaso 4-6-5 ... A Ascaso
(b/c Royal Academy - Starry Home) (Mare, dark sleek, red and blue quaternary cap)
5 (10) 103 PILSUDSKI 6 (D.F.G.) Lord Weston 4-6-5 ... W R Salmon 96
(b/c Poco President) (Colt, grey, blue trim, yellow check cap)
6 (8) 120 LE DESTIN 21 (D.F.G.) S Ascaso 4-6-5 ... O Deneve 96
(b/c Love Story - Blackie) (Black, yellow chevrons and cap)
7 (7) 493 PENTIRE 31 (B.F.G.) P Chappel 4-6-5 ... T Dutton 96
(b/c Be My Guest - Gulf Watch) (Black, yellow stripes, red sleeves)
8 (6) 114 SHAMIR 20 (B.F.G.) Dermot Weld 4-6-5 ... P Estery 96
(b/c Mots - Showman) (Pink, green quarters and amulet, green and pink hooded cap)
9 (5) 103 GABRIEL 21 (C.F.G.) S Ascaso 4-6-5 ... S Galetti 96
(b/c Gennaro - Gabi) (Grey, white sleeves, white sleeves)
10 (4) 144 DABAZAN 21 (D.G.H.) M H Atkinson 4-6-5 ... G Massa 96
(b/c Sader's Web - Dabazan) (Grey, red sleeves)
11 (3) 220 POLARS FIGHT 23 (G.S.) M Abdulla P Chappel-Ham 4-6-5 ... J Reid 97
(b/c Northern Flair - Anywhere) (White, red stars on sleeves, emerald green cap)
12 (1) 388 LE DESTIN 21 (G) (Debutant) P Deneve 4-6-5 ... D Head 97
(b/c Zayyan - My Darling) (Polo, green triple diamond, green sleeves, pink cap)
13 (2) 121 ZAGREB 98 (D.F.G.) S Smedley 4-6-5 ... M Wilson 97
(b/c Tresail - Sophomore) (White, red epaulettes, blue sleeves, white stars, quartered cap)
14 (1) 51 HELISSO 21 (D.F.G.) S Smedley 4-6-5 ... O Pepler 98
15 (9) 106 LUNA WELLS 1 (C.F.G.S.) I Alcock 4-6-5 ... G Thacker 98
(b/c Sader's Web - Lunella) (Grey, pink cap)
16 (4) 2254 LEONIDA 21 (D.F.G.) R Collet 4-6-5 ... G Bagagni 99
(b/c Leonida - Leonida) (Grey, pink cap)
17 (3) 1112 HELLAS 21 (D.F.G.) S Smedley 4-6-5 ... G Thacker 99
(b/c Leonida - Hellas) (Grey, green hoops, white sleeves, green amlet, hoopped cap)
18 (2) 1112 HELLAS 21 (D.F.G.) S Smedley 4-6-5 ... G Thacker 99
(b/c Leonida - Hellas) (Grey, green hoops, white sleeves, green amlet, hoopped cap)
19 (1) 1112 HELLAS 21 (D.F.G.) S Smedley 4-6-5 ... G Thacker 99
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25 (1) 1112 HELLAS 21 (D.F.G.) S Smedley 4-6-5 ... G Thacker 99
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(b/c Leonida - Hellas) (Grey, green hoops, white sleeves, green amlet, hoopped cap)
61 (1) 1112 HELLAS 21 (D.F.G.) S Smedley 4-6-5 ... G Thacker 99
(b/c Leonida - Hellas) (Grey, green hoops, white sleeves, green amlet, hoopped cap)
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RUGBY UNION

Pragmatic approach appeals to Gibbs as he makes history

FROM DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT, IN ROME

SCOTT GIBBS will become the first British player to make the journey from international rugby union to the equivalent status in rugby league and back again to union when he runs out at the historic Stadio Olimpico here today. Not that history seems much on Gibbs's mind. For him, rugby has been a job of work for three years and, even in the colours of Wales, that does not change.

The Swansea centre, picking up his union career after a well-paid flit with St Helens, will win his 21st cap against Italy. During his absence Wales have played 31 internationals and have not obviously improved the status they occupied before Gibbs left; an inference he may correctly draw given the speed with which he has been restored to the national side after only six appearances for

Swansea. He may soon be joined by other prodigies — Richard Webster, the Bath flanker, and David Young, the Cardiff prop.

"The management have had faith in me and it's up to me to repay that," Gibbs, 25, said yesterday after a team had been announced showing six changes of personnel from the XV beaten 40-33 by France last month. "When you pull the red jersey on you feel a lot better... but history doesn't mean that much. I want the win bonus on Saturday, then back home Sunday."

So much for romance. For a player such as Dafydd James, playing his first full international, today will mean much more. The Bridgend wing was capped against Australia as a replacement during the summer but now appears in a team robbed by injury of Ieuan Cutinha, their captain, said.

In the past four years their results show how the gap on Wales is closing: from 43-12, to 29-19 and, last January, 31-26 — all in games played in Cardiff. On their own territory, the Italians, drawn effectively from the two best clubs, Treviso and Milan, will not be easily subdued, though they lack the recent match practice enjoyed by Wales against the French and the Barbarians. Italy give a first cap to Leonardo Manieri, who is a mature player, in keeping with the general nature of a side that will be marshalled by one of the world's leading points accumulators, Diogo Dominguez.

As host nation, Wales could not have received a much more favourable draw for the 1999 Rugby World Cup that was announced yesterday: they are seeded in pool D, alongside the leading qualifier from the American pool — probably Argentina or Canada — the third-placed Pacific country and the sixth-placed European country.

To compound matters, Orrell has faced nearly all the strongest sides so far, while Harlequins' fixture list has been strangely benevolent. Their meeting at the Stoop today suggests only one likely outcome before the league shuts down until October 31, for European commitments.

Robbie Paul, the New Zealand-born Bradford rugby league scrum half, impressed at Swansea in midweek and gets a further chance at centre for Harlequins today in partnership with Gary Connolly. This match should be a truer measure of his considerable talents. Meanwhile, Will Carling will try to add to the feeling that England could do worse than select him at stand-off half for the match with Italy next month.

Like Orrell, Gloucester are without a win. They entertain Wasps tomorrow and have opted for Nathan Carter, a local boy, at flanker, in preference to Ian Smith, the Scotland international. Despite their unbeaten record, a worry for Wasps is that they have conceded more tries than they have scored. In the week that he was nominated for the enlarged England training squad, Will Green returns at prop for the London club.

Referee: C Spannberg (South Africa).

Evans, Nigel Davies and Mike Voyle. The management contemplated change at half back, too, but given the number of enforced switches elsewhere, decided to leave Neil Jenkins and Robert Howley in place.

For the development of this Wales team, in which Gareth Llewellyn makes his fifth appearance, victory is essential but no more so than for Italy, for whom this is the first of six significant internationals this winter. They play each of the five nations — whose championship they feel they are entitled to join — as well as Australia on October 23 and have set a minimum target of three victories. "We want to prove we can play good rugby and compete with the best teams," Massimo Cutinha, their captain, said.

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Though the qualifying positions of England, Scotland and Ireland will not be known until November 1998 there is a possibility of England joining New Zealand in pool B. The two nations met in the opening game of the 1991 tournament. South Africa, the holders, head pool A. And it is reasonable to assume that Australia will head the Pacific qualifiers and become the leading country in pool E.

ITALY: M Pavanese (Cavallino), P Vacca (Bari), G Sartori (Bari), G Sartori (Bari), F Francesco (Treviso), L Mancini (Treviso), D Dominguez (Milan), A Trenzoni (Treviso), M Cuttitta (Milan, captain), C Orlando (Milan), P Probert (Cuneo), M J Sington (Treviso), G O Arancio (Milan), C Chiodarolo (Treviso).

WALES: W T Proctor (Llanelli); S D Haig (Cardiff), G Thomas (Bridgend); J S Gibbs (Swansea), D James (Bridgend); N R Jenkins (Pontypridd); R Howley (Cardiff); C D Llewellyn (Cardiff); M Humphreys (Cardiff, captain); D Davies (Cardiff); G J Williams (Glamorgan), G G Llewellyn (Harlequins); G Jones (Cardiff); J Jones (Ebbw Vale); S Williams (Neath). Referee: C Spannberg (South Africa).

Referee

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SPORT

SATURDAY OCTOBER 5 1996

GOLF 46

Montgomerie closes
on top place in
order of merit



Super League becomes a global reality

BY CHRISTOPHER IRVINE

IN simple scoring terms, it was victory by 60-1. The Super League yesterday routed the Australian Rugby League (ARL) in the Federal Court in Sydney on every ground for appeal bar one and its long-cherished global vision for the sport will now finally become a reality.

The immediate consequences are a resumption of Anglo-Australian playing relations and a lifting of a ban on an Australasian Super League. An international fixture, probably in Brisbane, is being arranged for next month, at the end of Great Britain's tour of the Pacific and New Zealand. There will be a world club championship in October next year between the top four European and Australasian sides, followed

by a now meaningful World Cup.

The ARL will seek leave to appeal to the Australian High Court against the decision of the three appeal court judges, who overruled every ruling made by Justice James Burchett in his original judgment in favour of the ARL last February. However, the comprehensive nature of the Super League's victory led to mutterings from inside the ARL that it might have neither the stomach, nor the pocket, for a continuation of the 20-month battle to control rugby league.

Without tours to Australia and world play-offs, the European Super League, albeit successfully launched last summer, was hollow and impaired. Now, the prospect of both gives succour to a game that has the *raison d'être* for preventing another short-term

the controversial move to summer restored. Through Rugby League (Europe), the new promotional arm of the 12 Super League clubs, commercial possibilities can now also be tapped to the full. A busy calendar should also prevent another short-term

rush by players into rugby union.

A battle principally over pay-television rights in Australia was one that Maurice Lindsay, the Rugby Football League chief executive, felt throughout would elevate the sport to new plane. "There

was a dwindling band of us with faith in Super League's ability to win this case," he said. "There is a sense of vindication, but mainly excitement now that we'll have a global competition, with the best players in the world on the biggest stages."

For now, Australia has two national teams; the ARL version plays tomorrow in Papua New Guinea. The country will also have two competitions in 1997, unless there is a move by the 12 ARL clubs to join the ten-team Super League, which will start next February. If the worries expressed by some loyalists turn into a revolt, then the ARL will be hopelessly isolated, although all stood firm at a meeting last night.

In upholding all grounds for appeal, the judges found that loyalty agreements binding clubs to the ARL breached

trade practices and that the rights of players and clubs were unfairly affected by previous court orders.

The one ruling against the Super League's backers, News Ltd, the Australian arm of The News Corporation, the parent company of *The Times*, was that it should pay damages for interference to the ARL competition.

There is no doubting the tenacity of the now impoverished ARL in fighting what it sees as a takeover of its game and, as the most popular television and spectator sport in New South Wales and Queensland, a rich market. Super League matches in Australia and New Zealand will be shown on Foxtel, a pay-television channel 50 per cent owned by News Ltd. There was no word yesterday from Kerry Packer, whose Channel

9 station has bankrolled the ARL.

The fact that only three Super League clubs, Canberra, Cronulla and Brisbane, made the top-eight final series in the recent Australian Premiership, appears to back the argument by Ken Arthurson, the ARL chairman, that his organisation possesses the better players, though it is not totally convincing. In ruling out any compromise, Arthurson said he was convinced there would be two competitions next season.

For Great Britain, who met Fiji in the early hours today, the restoration of Australia to their tour itinerary represents an eagerly-awaited climax.

For Australian players of the calibre of Steve Renouf, Bradley Clyde and Laurie Daley, it will be a welcome return to the international arena.



Arthurson: defiant in defeat for ARL

Wales pin hopes on Dutch discord

BY RUSSELL KEMPSON

AN ABIDING memory of the European football championship was of England's 4-1 defeat of Holland. The Dutch were not only mastered but destroyed, a result that, even four months on, they find difficult to accept or comprehend. Tonight, when they open their 1998 World Cup campaign with a qualifying tie against Wales in Cardiff, they will attempt to exorcise the demons that still lurk within.

Nobody is foolish enough to admit as much, at least publicly. Victory over Wales, the group seven leaders, could hardly be deemed revenge for a humiliation on English soil. What Holland seek is a reaffirmation of their self-belief, a confidence verging on arrogance that they remain a force on the European stage.

It is a test, too, of team morale, which was partially lifted by a 2-2 draw against Brazil in Amsterdam in August. Has Guus Hiddink, the Holland coach, managed to persuade Ryan Giggs, who is suspended, that the task is not beyond them?

He has demanded passion and aggression, but bristled when a Dutch television crew suggested that he might employ kick-and-rush tactics. "I take great offence to that," he said. He does, though, hope that the 4-1 horrors return to haunt Holland. "Memories that don't disappear too quickly," he said. "I think it's going to be tough for them."

All week, Bobby Gould, the Wales manager, has been stoking up his players, hyping them into a state of simmering self-assurance. He believes that the two victories against San Marino — 11 goals scored, none conceded — can be accompanied by a third, more notable scalp: that even without Ryan Giggs, who is suspended, the task is not beyond them.

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Of the probable Dutch lineup, six started at Wembley, Jordi Cruyff shudders at the thought of another defeat. "It would be disastrous," he said. "It would give Wales nine points and us zero." He paused. "I don't want to even think about it."

WALES (4-4-2): N Southall (Everton) — M Bowen (West Ham United), A McEvilly (Sunderland), S Sykes (Sheffield Wednesday), M Penbridge (Sheffield Wednesday). M Robinson (Cheltenham Athletic), M Browning (Bristol Rovers), B Home (Birmingham City), G Spence (Sheffield Wednesday), C Chester (O'Sullivan (Nottingham Forest). Substitutes: to be announced.

HOLLAND (4-4-2): probabaly: E van der Sar (Ajax), J Stam (PSV Eindhoven), W Bergkamp (Ajax) — W Winter (Fenerbahce Istanbul), W Jonk (PSV Eindhoven), P Cocu (PSV Eindhoven), M Keizer (PSV Eindhoven), J Cruijff (Manchester United). R de Boer (Ajax). Substitutes: to be announced.

Rob Hughes, page 42
Welsh likely lads, page 42
Scotland depleted, page 42

Wales 6, Scotland 6, Belgium 0, Turkey 0, San Marino 0, Wales 6, Wales 6, San Marino 0, Belgium 2, Turkey 1

restore harmony among a group of players that appears to have inherited many of the egotistical qualities of its illustrious predecessors?

During Euro 96, Hiddink sent home Edgar Davids, the midfield player, for criticising his team selections. Rumours of racial conflict in the multicultural squad were rife, too. "We cannot deny the past," Hiddink said yesterday. "We have talked a lot about Euro 96, about what went on, and everybody is aware of it. The spirit before, during and after the Brazil game was good, and it is good now. Everyone knows their obligations, my expectations."

Perhaps it has helped that Davids is not with the party. He has been unable to gain a regular place in Milan's Serie A side. Hiddink is also with-



Rusedski, left, acknowledges the crowd after his quarter-final victory over Ollovskiy, while Henman's determination is evident after his success

Clubs unveil European vision

BY DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

THE leading clubs in European rugby union yesterday agreed a formula for a competition next season that they will put out to tender to broadcasters. It is not yet clear whether they intend to operate within the auspices of the game's traditional governing bodies.

Clubs from England, Wales, France and Italy, meeting at Heathrow, proclaimed an agreed "European-wide structure of club league and cup competitions" — from which Scotland and Ireland are noticeable by their absence. "Talks ... were the result of a desire by professional rugby union clubs to establish a stable and viable platform for the game in the northern hemisphere."

It is hard not to see this proposition as putting the cart before the horse. The clubs have to establish whether they are working as partners with, or in opposition to, their respective unions, which, in England and Wales, they have

yet to do. French clubs, meanwhile, have reached such an agreement and will not participate in a competition unauthorised by their federation.

If the club plan proves acceptable to any broadcaster, and the International Rugby Football Board (IRFB) has guidelines that channel such agreements through national unions, then it will cut directly across the existing two-tier knockout tournament organised by European Rugby Cup Limited (ERC), which begins next Saturday.

As a sweetener to television interests, which may see in this level of club rugby easier access to international rugby, the clubs have agreed to release their players for eight internationals in any season "on basis to be agreed with the unions".

That, at least, offers some hope of an area for co-operation, though Wales, for example, plan to play ten internationals this season

alone. There is no suggestion that the clubs would release players for district rugby in Scotland and Ireland, or for the representative tier planned by the Rugby Football Union, which will pit, say, the Northern Counties against the All Blacks and Argentina over the next two months.

"Today was an important step forward for the creation of

Wales prepare 45

Orrell anxiety 45

a properly organised and securely funded European-wide professional club rugby union structure," the clubs' statement claimed, although they have yet to produce evidence of the secure funding that is critical to their aims.

Tom Kiernan, chairman of ERC, doubts that the aims of the clubs replicate those of the unions. "That may be true for some of them but not for those

clubs who have turned themselves into business houses," he said in Rome, where the IRFB general meeting is in session. Marcel Martin, Kiernan's colleague from France, has offered details of the agreement reached between the French clubs and their governing body as a model to Donald Kerr, chairman of the English Professional Rugby Union Clubs, though he has yet to receive an acknowledgement.

Meanwhile Vernon Pugh, the IRFB chairman, has emphasised to the 61 countries attending the board's third general meeting that professionalism should not be allowed to divide the game.

"We must not let present-day problems overtake our longer-term objectives," Pugh said in Rome. "The IRFB is your governing body. Its authority has to be accepted by all: unions, clubs, provinces and other rugby bodies whether great or small, strong or weak."

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Pakistan prodigy shatters one-day record

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

SHAHID AFRIDI, of Pakistan, who is thought to be only 16, scored a century from 37 balls, a record in international one-day cricket, in the match against Sri Lanka in the Kenya four-nations tournament in Nairobi yesterday.

His age may be in dispute — one report says he is 18 — but there was no disputing the way he rewrote the record books in what was only his second appearance on the international stage. He hit 11 sixes and six fours before falling for 102. "It looked more like baseball than cricket," one spectator said.

Shahid, who was pulled out of the Pakistan youth side to replace the injured Mushtaq Ahmed, missed the fastest one-day international 50 by one ball, but smashed the previous record for a century by 11 deliveries. Both records were held by the Sri Lanka opener, Sanath Jayasuriya, who made 50 from 17 balls and 100 from 48 against Pakistan in a tournament in Singapore last April. Yesterday, Afridi had the satisfaction of hammering Jayasuriya out of the attack by taking 43 off the left-arm spinner's two overs, including five sixes.

The Pakistan manager, Nusrat Azim, said he had asked for a slow bowler to replace Mushtaq and was unaware that Afridi was also a batsman. "I didn't come here to sit," Afridi said. "My main job is to be a spinner. I just wanted to be useful to the team."

Inspired by their latest prodigy, Pakistan made 371 for 9 in their 50 overs. Afridi, who went in at 60 for one, shared a second-wicket partnership of 126 with his captain, Saeed Anwar, who scored 115.

Despite an innings of 122 from Aravinda de Silva, Pakistan bowled out their opponents for 289 to qualify for the final against South Africa tomorrow. But it was a close run thing. Had Sri Lanka made one

more run they would have qualified by virtue of a superior run-rate.

It looked as though Sri Lanka would just make it when, in the final over, Chaminda Vaas hit a huge six off Wasim Akram followed by a four. But the fast bowler had the last word, bowling Vaas for 16 with the penultimate ball of the match to finish with figures of five for 52.

It was a good win for Pakistan over the World Cup holders for they were also without Wasim Akram, who has returned home to be with his sick father.

The match aggregate of 660 runs was another record.



Afridi: 11 sixes in teenage blitz

Najibullah had hours to save himself from killers



Christopher Thomas
finds Kabul still shocked by the summary death of a former leader

A SCRAWLED message has appeared on the concrete post from which the former President Muhammad Najibullah was left dangling in the centre of Kabul last week: "Let this be a warning." The garden hose used for the hanging is still there, drawing a steady stream of people who stare in shocked silence.

Kabul observed its first full day of Friday worship under Taliban rule yesterday, still stunned by an event that has fuelled fears about the kind of people who are now master of three-quarters of Afghanistan.

There was ample reason to hate Najibullah, once a secret police chief, but no one wanted this. He had spent four and a half years sheltering in a United Nations compound, a short walk from the presidential palace where he ruled for six years before being toppled by the invading Mujahidin in April 1992.

In the frantic hours before being killed, he was either naive or too paralysed by fear to try to save himself. He was killed with his younger brother, Ahmadzaï, who had stayed with him. They slept by day, and by night they smoked, watched television, played cards and read. They feared being killed by snipers if they ventured in daylight into the compound's small walled garden.

There was a small swimming pool, which they used after dark. They installed punchbags and weightlifting equipment: both were in peak physical condition. A burly Najibullah, 6ft 2in and known as The Ox, lost 12½ stone and was almost unrecognisable from his presidential days. Every week or two he spoke by UN satellite phone to his wife, Fatana, and three daughters in Delhi, where they are guests of India's Government.

One day a year he donned a navy blue suit and tie and celebrated a formal birthday dinner for both of them. Their birthdays are a few days apart; they had always celebrated them jointly. A cake was baked for his last birthday, his fiftieth.

• A quarter of a million fled: the brothers could have disappeared in the chaos

what happened next is that Najibullah put up a fight, seized a Kalashnikov and was shot in the head and body. There is no doubt, according to a doctor, that he was dead when strung up. Before dying he had demanded the right to make a last public statement. He wanted journalists and a crowd of 1,000 to hear him. Having refused interviews during his incarceration, he was desperate to say something.

His brother, who had been talking frantically over a UN walkie-talkie seeking help, was driven by five gunmen to the palace. It was now 4.30am.

From there he was taken alive with Najibullah to a nearby roundabout and hanged. The bodies stayed suspended for two days. Najibullah's family was given safe passage by Taliban to Gardez, the family ancestral home south of Kabul, for last Monday's funeral.

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A Jewish woman weeps as an Israeli police officer carries a baby to safety after the Wailing Wall area was evacuated

Appeals for calm outweigh call to arms by Hamas

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

ISRAELIS and Palestinians pulled back temporarily from the brink of war yesterday as attempts by Islamic militants to incite "total confrontation" between Jews and Arabs after Friday prayers at Jerusalem's al-Aqsa mosque and elsewhere in the West Bank and Gaza Strip failed.

As both sides appealed for calm before tomorrow's American-sponsored peace negotiations on the Israel-Gaza border, Muslim clerics restrained stone-throwers and Israel softened its security dragnet on the 2.2 million Palestinians under its control.

Palestinian police, reacting to orders from Yassir Arafat, the President of the Palestinian Authority, worked to prevent new confrontations. As one east Jerusalem shopkeeper said, with an enigmatic smile: "For a few days at least, we are prepared to give peace a chance."

Although a handful of the 12,000 worshippers who managed to reach al-Aqsa threw stones on to hundreds of Jews praying at the Wailing Wall,

Israeli riot police refrained from storming the Temple Mount.

Al-Aqsa prayer leader Muhammed Hussein shouted through a loudspeaker as the stones began to fly: "We do not want to give the aggressors a chance to close the mosque. Please go home quietly."

Jewish worshippers fled from the Wall after evacuation orders were shouted by police, whose restraint had been specifically ordered from above.

Earlier, Binyamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, made an unprecedented appeal to Palestinians for calm over Israel's Arabic TV and radio channels. "I ask you, do not go into mourning. Do not lose hope. This is an opportunity for a fresh start for the peace process."

□ **Shamir ill:** Yitzhak Shamir, 80, the former Israeli Prime Minister, collapsed in Paris yesterday at a fundraising meeting, Israel Army Radio said. He was treated for exhaustion and high blood pressure. (AP)



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Member states hide behind British opposition as Chirac pushes for progress on Maastricht II

EU leaders target Major at start of treaty review

FROM CHARLES BRENNER IN DUBLIN AND RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

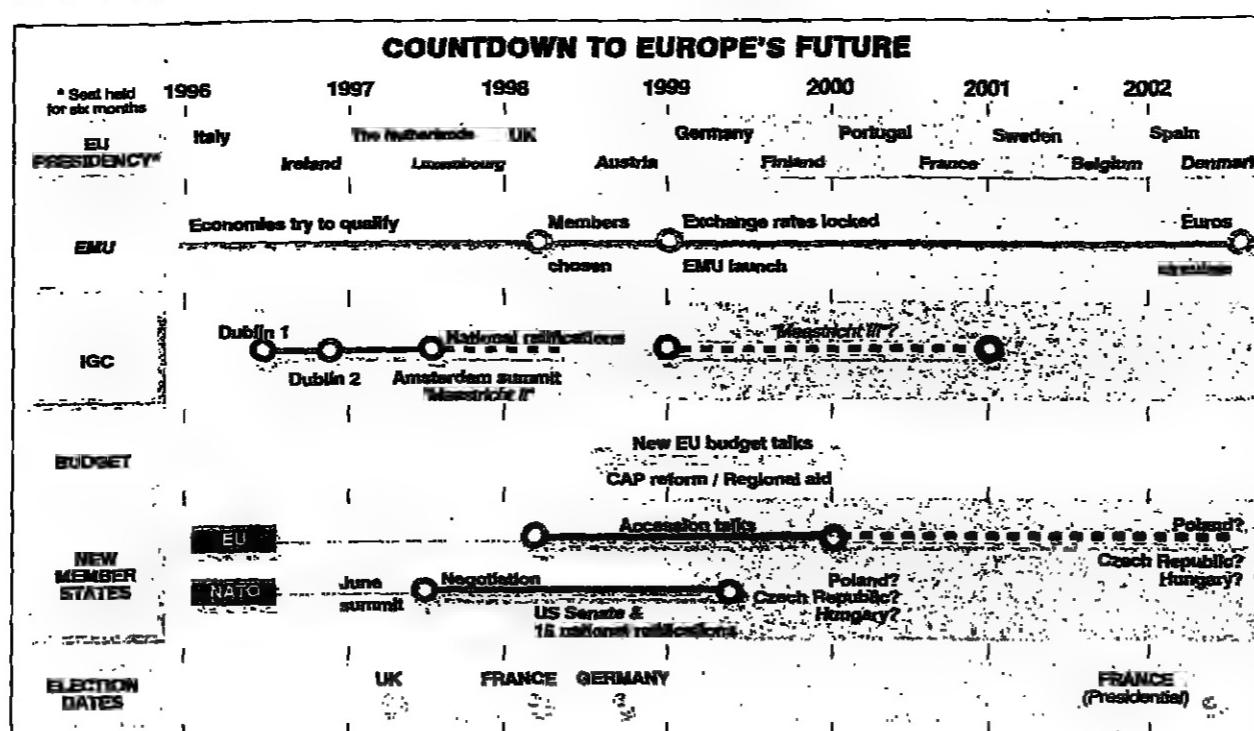
JOHN MAJOR will offer a convenient target today when European Union leaders meet in Dublin to give impetus to the virtually stagnant negotiations to revamp the Maastricht treaty. British resistance will not, however, drown out the increasing discord among the other states over the design of a new Europe.

The looming British election is being blamed for the way in which almost all the member states are holding back from serious negotiation at the Dublin inter-governmental conference (IGC).

The Prime Minister will take a stand against attempts by a strong EU majority to insert an "employment chapter" into the treaty. The proposal, developed by the

Union's Irish presidency as a balance to the treaty's commitment to monetary rigour, would seek to commit member states to creating and safeguarding jobs. Britain insists that the matter is up to member states, and Germany shares its qualms.

The leaders of Austria, The Netherlands and Portugal signalled their distaste for the Conservative administration this week when they took the unusual step of sending messages of support to Tony Blair at the Labour conference, despite the party's lukewarm stance on Europe. With the Tory conference only three days away, Mr Major will repeat his opposition to virtually all the reform proposals on the table, particularly a



draft "economic chapter" that has been approved by 12 of the 15 member states. There is widespread agreement, however, that Britain's opposition to any extension of EU powers is being used by other states to disguise their own misgivings about ceding sovereignty. In a glaring illustration of the prevailing mutual suspicions, Irish officials said yesterday that only Den-

mark and Austria had responded to a questionnaire last month in which all states were asked to what extent they were prepared to discard the national veto in favour of majority voting in EU decision-making. France and Germany, the motor of the Union and the core countries of the proposed single currency, refused to respond, despite noble statements about the

need for more majority voting. The episode has fuelled concern that today's gathering will end with a minimal brush-up of the kind desired by the British Government rather than the ambitious framework desired by the federal-minded states.

The aim of the summit is to kickstart the IGC exercise in time for a formal gathering in Dublin in December and conclusion of a Maastricht II treaty in Amsterdam next June. John Bruton, the Irish Prime Minister and President of the EU Council, wants a commitment to finish the new treaty in June and an agreement not to lower ambitions for the outcome.

President Chirac is eager to draw up the new EU treaty so that it can be ratified well before the French general elections in March 1998. He and Professor Romano Prodi, the Italian Prime Minister, set off for Dublin yesterday saying they had smoothed over their differences and would take a joint approach on issues ranging from the Middle East to monetary union.

Signor Prodi said after a summit in Naples with M Chirac that there was a "perfect understanding" between them

on all issues, including the vexed question of whether Italy's efforts to qualify for monetary union were sufficient in 1999. M Chirac, who had chosen not to utter parts of his earlier speeches in Naples that praised Italy's new policy, said at the end of the summit that Rome's rigour was a "courageous policy in line with the European spirit". He added: "The subsequent rise in the lira and fall in interest rates can only be appreciated."

Signor Prodi was also conciliatory, withdrawing remarks that he made earlier this week about French budgetary "window-dressing".

John Major, page 20
Leading article
and Letters, page 21

Paris and Bonn pencil in a date with destiny

BY GEORGE BROCK, EUROPEAN EDITOR

WHEN President Chirac arrives in Dublin today, he will be keen to shake the inter-governmental conference on the Maastricht treaty out of the torpor and obscurity into which the French leader thinks it has fallen.

The summiteers will hear a lot of vigorous galvanising language from the President, who intends to lecture his fellow leaders about the need for clarity and concentration.

A look at Europe's crowded calendar for the rest of the century explains why M Chirac is in so much of a hurry: 1998 is so packed with decisions, selections and elections that it will become either the EU's *annus mirabilis* or *annus horribilis*, and M Chirac and Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor, are busy trying to work out ways of successfully stage-managing 1998 and 1999.

President Chirac does not want his compatriots still bickering over the rights and wrongs of Maastricht II in the months before the French general election of March 1998. So he will be urging the summit to hurry up.

Ever since the architects of European integration have harboured designs on the sensitive political subjects of frontiers, crime, armies and currencies, voters have been dropping spacers in the works and running carefully-

Enlarging Nato depends on all 16 parliaments in the present allied countries ratifying a new Nato treaty — and on Russia agreeing to tolerate an American-led alliance creeping eastward.

The target date for the entry of the first lucky few Central European states to squeeze inside is April 4, 1999 — exactly half a century after Nato's founding treaty came into force. That is an attractive incentive to a leading country such as Poland. But for countries such as Bulgaria, Romania and the Baltic republics, the wait will be much longer.



John Major, who is likely to oppose any "employment chapter", and John Bruton, host of the Dublin talks

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OPINION
Too little, too late? Lord Gowrie's protests about shrinking subsidy are years behind the times



INTERVIEW
Feted in Paris, Yasmina Reza bursts on to the London scene next week with her droll comedy, *Art*

THE TIMES ARTS



GOING OUT
From Meg Ryan going to war in the Gulf for her new film, *Courage Under Fire* ...



GOING OUT
... to Jessye Norman in recital at the Festival Hall: the top events are in Weekend, page 16

For months the dread word "lottery" has not crossed these few centimetres that I call home. I have survived even myself with my Trappist abstinence. But frankly, what's the point of banging on? Those with the power to institute change clearly prefer to sit tight in their little quangos, rather than face the mess outside.

Consider the great flaw in lottery funding: the bizarre rule that allowed the lottery to bankrupt gleaming new culture palaces but prevented it from saving good performing companies from going bust. Readers may recall that this guy was pointed out here and elsewhere, years ago. If Lord Gowrie, the Arts Council's chairman, disputes this, let him dispatch his chauffeur to inspect the annals of *The Times* (although, knowing the Arts Council, I expect it has an entire department devoted to annals inspection).

But the Arts Council did nothing when the lottery rules were being drawn up. The reason? Pure greed.

I wanted its cake and its icing too. It expected the Treasury "honourably" to maintain the arts subsidy even when vast sums were flowing from the lottery.

Unbelievably naive? Those are not words that spring to mind about Gowrie. But I fear that if mud was a trifle vain. When he took up the Arts Council job, replacing the incurably inert Lord Palumbo, he really did believe that, as a former Tory minister, he could pull strings. The Treasury might be persuaded to increase the grant, he told me at the time, because the arts subsidy was too small to have a "macro-economic implication". I didn't have a clue what he meant, but it sounded jolly convincing.

Alas, he has been betrayed by his old buddies. Macro-betrayed. The subsidy has been cut, viciously. And the Treasury has pointed

out, as everybody (except the Arts Council) knew it would, that the lottery has more than doubled the amount the Arts Council has to play with, so what's the problem?

The problem, of course, is that the Arts Council is stymied by the daft rules it helped to formulate.

Its response to this crisis? It arrived in two parts, both useless. First came last month's "stabilisation fund". This does indeed change the rules to allow lottery funds to prop up arts organisations in dire straits. But it is so tiny in scope as to be pointless.

Second came Lord Gowrie's hopelessly belated verbal attack on the Government this week, accompanying an Arts Council annual report that offers more of the same. For a man who told *The Times* in May 1994 that the arts world was full of "subsidy junkies", Gowrie is curiously indignant now about the

arguments on an altogether more spiritual plane. "Only perhaps the Sovereign carries as much moral weight beyond these shores as our arts," he tells us.

I have read this extraordinary sentence many times, and still have no idea what it means. How much "moral weight" does Liam Gallagher carry beyond these shores? And if luvvies get more handouts from the taxpayers, does this give them more "moral weight", or less?

The Arts Council report also urges Sir Cameron Mackintosh to write an article titled "No public subsidy, no West End". In other words, undermine the subsidised theatres that nurture talent, and you jeopardise a hugely successful industry.

That's a more promising line of argument. The weakness in it is

whatever that airy tosh means. I fear that opera-house extensions don't feature highly. The message is: "The bonanza is over, chaps — and if you have squandered it, tough luck."

It's good to hear something from Labour on the subject of culture. Stephen Dorrell's invisible-man act when he was Heritage Secretary seems, in retrospect, like a whirlwind of innovation when compared with Jack Cunningham's performance so far as Shadow Heritage Secretary.

But the grim truth is that Labour will probably not reverse the arts subsidy cuts. What's more, it will divert lottery money away from the arts as well. No wonder Gowrie is desperate. It's hard to imagine this patrician aesthete leading the Arts Council into an era where "the people's priorities" come first. Is there some university that offers crash courses in *Baywatch*, *Benidorm* and take-away biryanis? Probably. If so, could it find a place for a bemused peer of the realm?

Welcome to 'the people's priorities'

IN THE ARTS
RICHARD MORRISON
"£17 million in real terms" that has been lopped off the Arts Council budget in the intervening years.

Rather than offering the Treasury lessons in "macro-economic implications", however, he now

argues that if the arts are so damn successful, why do they need subsidy? Well, you and I and Lord Gowrie know the answer to that. But to the averaged dense Tory or Labour MP the subtle reasoning is not so easy to follow.

Besides, whatever goodwill there was in political circles towards the arts largely evaporated after those huge lottery handouts. That was ominously clear from Tony Blair's speech this week, when the PM-in-waiting questioned whether the lottery money had, in fact, all gone to good causes. "We want to fund specific environment, education and public health" priorities through the proceeds of the lottery, he said. "I want the people's money to go on the people's priorities."

Gosh, if I were an arts administrator that sentence would scare me stiff. The people's priorities?

Three men and a lady

JUNE DUCAS TALKS TO FRENCH WRITER YASMINA REZA AS HER PLAY *ART* ARRIVES IN LONDON WITH A STAR CAST

Yasmina Reza's play *Art* was a *succès de scandale* in Paris, running for an unprecedented 18 months and picking up two Molière awards. Some 30 productions are currently playing on the Continent. Yet she is nervous about British audience reactions when it opens in the West End in two weeks' time because, she says, "the English are such an idiosyncratic race".

We meet at a hotel in St Germain, around the corner from where 37-year-old Reza lives with film director Didier Martiny and their two young children. Dressed in skin-tight suede trousers and modish curly black jacket, Reza is not your stereotypical writer, aloof from the vagaries of fashion trends. "I love clothes," she says. "When I was photographed by English and German *Vogue*, it amused me to play the glamour card. After all, real life is part frivolous and part serious, full of contradictions. A person can think about laxatives at the same time as listening to Schoenberg."

This is the kind of ambiguity that informs her writing. Matthew Warchus, who is directing *Art* here, compares her to Samuel Beckett in that she takes a simple idea and uses it as a vehicle to say something profound — camouflaging it under the cover of comedy. "Yasmina turns a shrewd eye on the human condition," he says.

Translated by Christopher Hampton, *Art* is fiercely funny about three men, Serge (Tom Courtenay), Marc (Albert Finney) and Yvan (Ken Stott), who have

been the best of buddies for 15 years. When Serge buys a modern painting, a blank white canvas — arguably with tinges of grey lines — for £20,000, he throws their friendship into disarray, unleashing intense and hitherto unexpressed sentiments.

Apprehensive she may be, but Reza is not overwhelmed by the starry cast. She says that if she had not considered them suitable, she would have vetoed them from the start. And having watched the initial rehearsals, she is impressed with their interpretation of the roles.

Art is Reza's third play, and took shape after two leading French actors asked her to write a piece for them. "I couldn't think of a subject," she says. "Then one day a friend of mine bought a Martin Barre, a contemporary artist whose pictures hang in the Pompidou and who is well-known in arty circles here. I thought that the price of Fr200,000 was ridiculous. But the concept fired my imagination."

How does she manage to capture the psyche of three distinct males?

"Men are mysterious creatures," she says. "It fascinated me to write about them and to try to understand what makes them tick. Although I hate to generalise, men take themselves more seriously than women — possibly a sign of immaturity. Unlike a woman, it is acceptable for men to swear, to be coarse or insult each other. Their vocabulary and manner of speaking are quite different from ours."

She admits, however, that the characters portray some of her own personal traits. "I develop many of my own thoughts through Marc, and I suppose I am highly strung like Serge."

Could the play be performed by three women? "Impossible. Women are more curious, inquisitive beings. After years of camaraderie, they would be completely at fault with each other's foibles."

Reza's background is exotic. Her late father, a Jew whose roots were Iranian, was born in Moscow but brought up in France. Her mother, a violinist, is Hungarian. "My grandparents and most of my

relations are scattered all over the world," Reza explains. "Growing up, it gave me a broader perspective than my peers, and I often write about foreigners. We are a close-knit family. At home, our humour has always been intrinsically Jewish. Jews are able to mock themselves. It's the sort of wit that crosses all boundaries."

Perhaps this explains why Reza has touched a universal nerve.

Translated into 15 languages, it has already been seen in Sweden, Norway, Holland, Israel and Germany; it is scheduled to go in 1997 to Canada, Russia, Spain and Italy. If all goes well in London, the next stop is New York.

Reza studied drama at the University of Nanterre and later went to the Jacques Lecoq school of acting, but quickly realised that acting did not suit her temperament. "Actors are slaves to the whims of other folk," she says. "I find that intolerable."

Prone to depression, Reza seeks solitude — reading, playing classical music and the piano. Her views on success are ambivalent — it both thrills and disturbs her. "Of course, it is wonderful to be praised and feted," she says. "But you expect, in the middle of all the glory, to be over the moon with joy. My great flaw is that I am unable to be happy in the present. In retrospect everything is marvellous, and I have hope but no expectations — and there is a difference — for the future. But today is an illusion."

● *Art* is in preview at Wyndham's Theatre from tonight and opens on October 15 (0171-369 1736)

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THEATRE
In the West End Gene Wilder brings in the crowds, and the laughs, for Neil Simon



RISING STAR
"All I want to do is prove myself in the same way as Orson Welles," says the playwright Martin McDonagh

THE TIMES ARTS



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Francis Bacon revealed in our exclusive serialisation of Michael Peppiatt's biography



NEXT WEEK
Apocalypse then, but a little light comedy now: Francis Ford Coppola on his new film

GREAT BRITISH HOPE
Rising stars in the arts firmament

MARTIN McDONAGH

Age: 26.

Profession: Playwright.

Forthcoming: At the end of November, *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* returns from a tour of Ireland to the West End — at the Theatre Downstairs, St. Martin's Lane. In mid-December, *The Cripple of Inishmaan* starts at the Coateside.

How prolific is he? McDonagh has seven plays in stock. "They're all pretty good," he says. He has also written 22 radio plays, all rejected by the BBC. "I once had six turned down in one day. I would never accept any offer from BBC Radio now."

Doesn't that sound arrogant? Up to a point, but then he is the winner of the 1996 George Devine Award for Most Promising Playwright. *Beauty Queen* was ecstatically received in the spring: "hilariously funny" and "wickedly enjoyable" being typical notices. "I don't mind being called arrogant," he says. "All I want to do is to prove myself in the same way as Orson Welles or Muhammad Ali."

Any theatrical heroes? "I think I've been to the theatre about 15 times in my life. I quite like some early Pinter stuff, but I admire film-makers such as Scorsese, Leone and Keaton. My aim is to get as much John Woo into the theatre as possible."

So does cinema beckon? "I'd be happy to stay in Britain and make a film like *Trainspotting*, or follow an independent Hollywood route."

How does he work? "I write very quickly and I'm very much a first draft man. I try to bring a 100 per cent perfect script to the first rehearsal, but I suppose it can be around 90 to 95 per cent. I never really wanted to work, and I certainly don't call this work. I was unemployed for a long time with the odd spell in an office and a supermarket. Cash doesn't seduce me at all."

GUY WALTERS

• Starting next week, Great British Hope will appear on Wednesday's arts pages



Clowns touched by Hamlet

THEATRE
Laughter on the 23rd Floor Queen's

tunes, coming as it does with a lovely, lugubrious performance from Gene Wilder at the TV comic at its centre?

One accusation against Simon has been that a wry, rueful and very American sort of sentimentality mars his work. Well, *Laughter* does get slightly mawkish at the end, but elsewhere it is as brashly funny as anything he has written. Another accusation is that he is overdependent on smart one-liners and put-downs. But *Laughter* involves a bunch of feisty, wrangling scriptwriters who use jokes as everything from evasion to aggression to cocky self-display. So quip becomes character and repartee is dramatic action.

Like Simon's recent *Brighton Beach Memoirs* and *Broadway Bound*, the comedy is semi-autobiographical. Back in the early 1950s he actually toiled alongside Mel



"Using jokes as everything from evasion to aggression to cocky self-display": (from left) Linal Haft, Rolf Saxon, Toby Whitehouse, Gene Wilder

Brooks, Woody Allen and others composing TV sketches for Sid Caesar's *Your Show of Shows*. At the Queen's, Simon himself is transformed into

Toby Whitehouse's bashful young Lucas Brickman, and the great comedian has become Wilder's Max Prince: an ochre-faced sad sack exuding baffled, beleaguered and highly entertaining gloom.

Onstage, all is dreary, dire or both. Joe McCarthy denounces General Marshall, the Rosenbergs are electrocuted, and blacklisting has hit Hollywood. Moreover, TV apprentices are in the process of trimming and emasculating what they think too sophisticated for Iowa and Nebraska. That gives the fe-

medics. Another exploits er to seethe, bluster, put his fist through the wall, and gradually evolve from incoherent paranoia to stunned dismay.

There are faults with his performance. He lacks the anger and the strength that an underling attributes to him. But you should hear him emitting mad military threats against the TV moguls or watch him falling asleep on his feet, victim of a blend of tranquilisers, booze and exhaustion. Like me, you will probably laugh a lot.

• This review appeared in later editions of *The Times* yesterday

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Decline and fall of the publisher

The City has fallen out of love with publishing, says Michael Sissons

As British publishers leave the Frankfurt Book Fair this week, they return to an industry in deep trouble. Publishing has been a flagship business for 100 years, at the centre of our social, political and cultural life, a shining example of success abroad. Educational, scientific and reference publishing remain strong, and profitable. But the conglomerates have now swallowed many leading trade publishers. This has been neither a happy nor a successful experience. It is a derelict industry, which has lost its way.

The halcyon days of general publishing were from 1930 to 1960. Perhaps the best account of that period was Fred Warburg's autobiography, *Occupation for a Gentleman*. This title froze in popular perception the image of a refuge for the more languid products of Oxbridge. Yet the founders of the great imprints of that period, Allen Lane at Penguin, Jonathan Cape, Harnish Hamilton, Michael Joseph, George Weidenfeld, Warburg himself, were hardly gentlemanly in their business dealings. Penguin pioneered paperback publishing but the most successful was Billy Collins. He invented modern techniques of selling and promoting books into every corner of the English-speaking world. Collins was formidably efficient and profitable.

Throughout the Sixties, publishing remained powerful and influential. But publishing failed to weave its fortunes into the emerging power of investigative journalism and television. By the 1980s, the dominant position of British publishing worldwide had been eroded. American publishers were active in world markets. Countries such as Australia and Canada had developed indigenous publishing. The book, as a unique vehicle for entertainment, education and information seemed threatened by new media. A communications revolution, driven by new technology, heralded an electronic future which would change all assumptions about the delivery and the reception of the word.

But the markets for the first time focused on general publishing, as financial analysts awoke to the media sector, about which the City had been notably ignorant. They correctly forecast the prospects of commercial growth from the media explosion. They correctly perceived a great shortage of media stock. It was not easy to buy into either television or newspapers. They saw rich pickings in publishing. At the end of the 1980s, extraordinary prices were paid for British publishers, and the face of the industry was transformed. Yet a further assumption made by the City has been flawed. If you turned an occupation for gentlemen into a modern business, it was thought, with costs cut to the bone and modern sales promotion and marketing welded onto existing creative strengths, a highly profitable future beckoned. A hundred or so general publishing firms shrank to under ten major publishing groups. HarperCollins, Random House, Reed, Hodder Headline, Macmillan, Penguin and Bantam Corgi dominate the premier league. The smaller houses of the penumbra seem fated to become the feeders, the providers of talent for the big battalions.

The management of this volcanic transition has been pretty disastrous. The profit which consumer publishing generates rarely satisfies the expectations of public companies for short-term return. A third of the workforce disappeared

Publishing needs more than a few bestsellers to survive in the Nineties.

The City has fallen out of love with publishing. It has proved difficult to achieve a 10 per cent net return from general books. Public companies and venture capitalists have winced at the cash appetites of publishers. Reed, who paid more than £500 million for its publishing division, was unable to raise £100 million when it put Reed Consumer Books on sale last year. Scherer puts its true value at around £60 million. The sober Boston publisher Houghton Mifflin bought the family firm of Gollancz for £8 million, and sold it just two years later for £2 million. Apart from Bantam Corgi, which has exemplary owners in the German group Bertelsmann, there is little profit to show. There are a handful of publishing houses which are demonstrably well run and well focused, the privately owned Faber & Faber and John Murray, the new firms Fourth Estate and Orion Weidenfeld among them.

Yet the book itself has held its own in an expanding entertainment market, and will continue to do so. English as a lingua franca has established itself in the last decade in every field of human activity. We have here a rich resource of creative talent and professionalism at all levels in our language. We need for the future an industry which will reflect and promote that unique natural resource. Publishing doesn't need to be reminded that no job is for ever. But a healthy publishing industry needs continuity, the prudent scattering of seed corn, patience for the long term. It must, above all, respect the editorial function which is its mainspring. It has never subsisted on a diet of bestsellers and never will. We need a new generation of true publishers.

The author is joint chairman of the literary agency Peters Fraser & Dunlop.

Music Hall

RADICAL plans from Sir Peter Hall to shake up the English National Opera have gone down like a salt-water gongle at the Coliseum. In an article entitled *The ENO Experience*, in the ENO's in-house magazine, Sir Peter writes: "May I be provocative here?



A failed single currency would be a disaster for Britain as well as Europe, says John Major

We must not allow EMU to be fudged

Whether or not to join a single currency, if one comes into being, will be one of the most important economic and political choices to face this country in decades.

The plain truth is that — whether we are in or out — we have a strong interest in shaping the decisions still to be taken. We can only do that if we stay at the table.

This view is shared by the practical experience of six years as Prime Minister, dealing with the realities of standing up for Britain's interests in Europe. I believe the right course must be to make our choice only when the issues are clear. Our determination to stick to this course is often misrepresented as being simply a balancing act. But it isn't.

There are, of course, perfectly good arguments for and against joining a single currency. But there are many unknowns and uncertainties, all of which could affect our country.

At the most basic level, we cannot yet be sure EMU will go ahead as planned in 1999. We don't yet know who is likely to be in the first wave if and when it goes ahead.

We cannot yet know how much economic convergence will have been achieved. We do not know how strictly the economic criteria

will be adhered to. Or whether participants will have achieved the necessary degree of flexibility in their markets to deal, for example, with different levels of structural unemployment.

And we do not know how EMU will work in detail, and what kind of conditions will bind those in it, including such crucial conditions as the regime for controlling each country's budget deficit — the so-called stability pact.

We also need to weigh the effect of the City of being in or out, as one of the major financial centres in the world. A debate is currently underway among the City's financial experts, but there are divided views. And much depends on decisions still to be taken. We need to make sure those decisions protect British interests, whatever course of action we decide on in the end.

We must judge the overall balance of advantage for British business. Here, too, a debate is under way, and there are widely varying views for the moment. And what about other groups, such as farmers? What, for example, will be the implications for the operation of the common agricultural policy?

And there are still big questions we need to examine about the relations between those who join a single currency and those who stay out. We want to ensure that these are resolved in a way that does not distort the single market, which is vital to Britain. We need to be sure that the Community budget is kept under tight control. And we need to examine how the Community institutions will function effectively and harmoniously in the changed circumstances.

And we need to consider the implications of all these issues for enlargement of the EU. These issues will have a significant impact on the relative advantage of being in or out. But whatever we decide, whether we are in or out, they will affect us.

If EMU goes ahead, with or without us, it's in our interest to ensure that it does so on a basis and timetable that can be sustained. A failed single currency would be a disaster. Our European partners buy 60 per cent of our exports. Our companies are major investors in their economies and the single market — for example by fudging the criteria for entry — the British economy will suffer as well. We have a strong interest in a thriving European economy. That underlines that whatever the outcome, it is important to maximise our

influence over the preparations. So Britain's voice must be heard in the European discussion of how a single currency would work. We have made a major contribution already. By staying at the centre of the debate we have ensured that the ERM remains voluntary. The ins and outs are firmly on the agenda, and we are best placed to resist protectionist measures damaging to Britain's interests.

We will continue to do so. That is in Britain's interest. That is what the City and business expect from us. We must remain closely involved in the debate about the future of our largest market and remain free to decide how best to participate in it.

Britain's own interests will dictate which way our decision goes. To rush into a premature decision, to detach ourselves from the debate about Europe's future, would mean we could neither protect effectively nor advance what we saw as the British interest. We must look at the issues dispassionately and come to the right decision for Britain.

And that is what we will do. If we decide to go ahead in the next Parliament we would consult the British nation in a referendum and accept their verdict. If we think it right to stay out, we will do so.

Portrait of a lady in pearls



Three generations of Country Life women: the Hon Anne Wood, 1936; Lady Clarissa Duncombe, 1956, her daughter; and Laura Collin, 1996, Lady Clarissa's daughter



The Country Life frontispiece is a great institution — but its classic formula has fallen foul of political correctness

Sometimes we wipe a grubby hand across our eye and surprise it with a tear. *Country Life* magazine is consigning the engagement photograph frontispiece to the spike. Young women are marrying later. They have careers, do not sit for portraits and will not appear dewy-eyed in a glossy magazine, as if contemplating the suites of an English marriage. The "girl in pearls" has gone the way of the debutante. She has died a natural death. The age has closed her down.

I must declare an interest. At the start of my career I was briefly an editorial assistant on *Country Life*, a post that included editing the frontispiece. I was not permitted to select the girl. That seminal role in the history of British style fell to the Editor, John Adams (or, so we believed, his wife). Each weekend he would carry down to the country of Baron Lenare, Rosalind Mann and Bassano and Vandyle. There, safe from the smoke and sin of the city, he would choose the girl with the scent of hay in his nostrils and the cry of hounds in the air. Back at the office we gambled heavily on the outcome.

The Editor's wife saw Britain's future security as built on the rock of a good regiment married to a good hospital. In those days the girl was usually a nurse [not a witness debutante as often supposed]. She had a head start if she was at Bart's, Guy's or St Thomas' and did not marry a doctor.

My job was to phone the lucky winner, hear her squeal of pleasure, check the regiment's name and wish her every happiness. For a young man alone in London, it

was a distracting start to the week. Most of the staff thought the frontispiece sexist, bourgeois and not long for this world. At the time I agreed. It has outlived all our expectations.

One of the most recent girls to receive the call will have been Miss Laura Collin, pictured above, from the September 12 issue. Miss Collin represents the latter-day frontispiece and her marital status is not mentioned. It so happens that both Miss Collin's mother and her grandmother were frontispiece girls, respectively Lady Clarissa Duncombe in 1956 and Lady Anne (Feveringham) in 1936. We can therefore compare similar faces over more than half a century. The comparison shows the change and, dare I say it, decay in this gallery of English portraiture.

The 1930s picture of Anne Wood is superb. The camera is unafraid of her and she of the camera. The hair is simply combed and the eyes look straight at the viewer. Apart from the collar, there is no clutter, just a cool, intimate stare. By the 1950s, Clarissa Duncombe is presented in less striking fashion. She looks away from the camera and is further distanced by a new look dress and studio halo. The face takes up less of the page and we cannot peer into her eyes to fix the personality.

In the Sixties and Seventies, the frontispiece girl followed the shifting sociology of country society. There were fewer nurses, more

secretaries and interior decorators. They married farmers and professional men rather than soldiers. They wore lambswool-with-pears almost as uniform. But the strength of the picture lay in the face, not the setting. Over time this softness softened and narrowed. The make-up became less assertive, the hair more natural. In 1990 colour was introduced, the skin tanned and the mouth began to smile. At some point teeth appeared and have remained ever since.

The magazine has recently struggled to keep the feature alive. Celebrities have refused to judge the "frontispiece of the year" award. Efforts to make the girl more natural and "active" have often been ridiculous. We have had girls with dogs, girls on farms, girls driving cars, girls with men (Good Heavens) and even with children. We have had students, occupational therapists, designers. We have had horses galore. Last month a Miss Hermione Jackson was pictured kissing a horse with her eyes shut — said to be preparing a yearling for the Newmarket sales

before going up to Newcastle University".

The girls have retreated timidly from the camera and the once-dominant face has shrunk into the background. The photographs have become a clutter of context, of clothes, houses, pets, possessions and the paraphernalia of a career.

The frontispiece often looks like a fashion picture or country house advertisement. Miss Collin stands in what seems a rhubarb patch. Her hair is casual, her eyes half closed. The picture is fresh and jolly, but it is not a portrait. By moving from face to activity, *Country Life* has done the opposite of update it. The women have been loaded with social and economic symbolism. As for engagement, it is taboo. Political correctness has come to *Country Life*.

Feminists should have cheered the former style. In my view, the old frontispiece rejected both the *Feminine Mystique* of Betty Friedan and *The Beauty Myth* of Naomi Wolf. Ms Wolf may be right that the magazine industry enslaves women with excessive body awareness. (Though she sees women as strangely inert victims of male willpower.) She may protest that the average weight of a *Playboy* girl is 17 per cent below the female average, and that 78 per cent of 19-year-olds are neurotically "dissatisfied with their bodies". *Vogue* may be guilty as charged with inducting anorexia.

These accusations could hardly be laid at *Country Life's* door. True, the subjects were, at least from the 1940s, engaged to be married. One critic saw the frontispiece girl as "a rabbit frozen in the oncoming headlights of matrimony". But she was hardly presented as a sex object or gender stereotype. Nor, as Lord Clark wrote of the nude, was our eye "accustomed to the harmonious simplifications of antiquity", seeing the woman "not as a living organism but as a design".

The frontispieces were more in the tradition of Victorian "proposal paintings". These showed the woman at a turning point in her life, her face full of hope and decision, often looking into the distance or directly at the viewer and away from the man. To me, the *Country Life* photograph was, essentially, a generalised portrait. It had nothing to do with sex or beauty or motherhood, but conveyed the changing English character through the medium of a face in close-up.

Country Life has moved towards political correctness and fallen foul of it. In giving its subjects props behind which they can retreat from the camera it has given hostages to fortune. Modern photography can be unforgiving, but the photographer's art is to set the sitter at ease and draw character from her or his physiognomy.

A portraitist does not need to fill the frame with horses, spaniels, roses or farmyards; least of all need he make a political statement. These things tell me nothing of a person's character, only their status. I want to look into the eyes and wonder at the thoughts. The *Country Life* frontispiece is a hundred years old next year. Another 100 years, please.

Simon Jenkins

gled to keep the feature alive. Celebrities have refused to judge the "frontispiece of the year" award. Efforts to make the girl more natural and "active" have often been ridiculous. We have had girls with dogs, girls on farms, girls driving cars, girls with men (Good Heavens) and even with children. We have had students, occupational therapists, designers. We have had horses galore. Last month a Miss Hermione Jackson was pictured kissing a horse with her eyes shut — said to be preparing a yearling for the Newmarket sales

Rain, an aggressively groovy contemporary art show, was opening. While a very casual Lord Rothschild dandied the recently divorced Maya Flick on his knee, Jay Jopling, Hirst's agent, talked up his man's project.

The artist has taken his spin-painting machine out with him to educate the natives in making great art with nothing more than a whirling canvas and a paint gun.

● Another step up the cultural ladder for Tara Palmer-Tomkinson



Hanoi Hirst

HAVING conquered Soho and West Hampstead, Damien Hirst, pickler, has ambitions in Vietnam. He is currently in Hong Kong, from where he will travel to Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City in preparation for big shows there next year. Hirst's roadshow, entitled *Making Beautiful Paintings*, was the talk of Thursday night's thrash at the ICA in London where *Fool's*

Chelsea's embryonic Edith Sitwell. Next Thursday, she will be addressing the Cambridge Union, proposing the motion "This house believes in dressing for success". It is her first speaking engagement since her writing career took off. Her fellow debaters are somewhat less stellar. They are the comedian Greg Proops, former Neighbours actor Mark Little, Jeff Banks of the Clothes Show and the former editor of Cosmopolitan, Marcelle D'Argy Smith. Next stop Question Time.

Derailed

BRITISH Rail's last non-privatised InterCity service caused havoc for the hundreds of Labour delegates returning from Blackpool. Less than 48 hours after voting to renationalise the railways, the natty dressed Blairites were hit by two breakdowns on the Preston to London service. The 4.20pm train broke down without even leaving Preston, and its replacement was heaving with passengers from Scotland, forcing many of the delegates onto the floor of first class.

This train then broke down in Wigan, forcing passengers onto a third train. Food then ran out in the

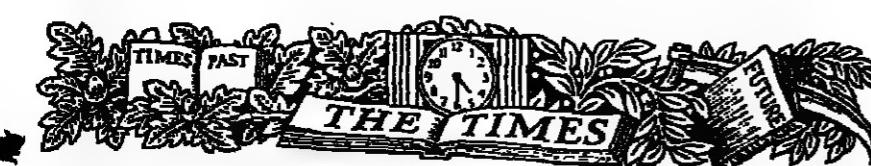


Tara: new talking point

buffet and the word "Blackpool" was muttered as if it were a curse. The delegates finally arrived at Euston four hours late. Sir George Young is expected to announce the sale of the InterCity West Coast franchise at next week's Tory conference.

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MAJOR'S MAYBE

Maximising influence means keeping EMU open

One issue overshadows this weekend's summit in Dublin, next week's Conservative Party conference in Bournemouth and the looming general election. It occupies no formal place to itself on any agenda. It will dominate neither of the main party's manifestos. But the debate on the European single currency is, as the Prime Minister acknowledges on the facing page, with very English understatement, "one of the most important economic and political choices to face this country in decades". It is, almost certainly, the most important choice the nation has faced since 1945. Over the next week *The Times* will publish the views of the most authoritative voices in that debate within the governing party.

The Government's current position is not as easy to defend as that of its Tory critics. It provides no vivid banner around which partisans can rally. But the position outlined by Mr Major is the best which Britain can currently occupy to safeguard its own interests and those of its European partners. By maintaining a strategic ambiguity on the future of the single currency the British Government may be able more easily to persuade others in Europe to share some of its concerns. As long as Britain reserves its right to join, it can claim a particular role in shaping the single currency's future.

That role could be decisive. The Prime Minister argues that, "a failed single currency would be a disaster". There is no doubt that driving divergent economies into the corset of a single currency would create unemployment, depress demand and provoke social unrest. Mr Major is alive to the pressures on the Continent for some fudging of the convergence criteria to allow countries ill-qualified for monetary union to join the first wave for political reasons. *Amour propre* must not prevail over economic prudence. If the criteria were fudged then the potential economic dislocation would cause turbulence from which Britain could not insulate itself, even outside EMU.

EUROPE: A HISTORY

A great new work by a great British scholar

Few works of intellectual scope and importance have started with the claim to contain "little that is original". Readers of our books pages last Thursday will have noticed a laudatory review of a book which begins in precisely that way. As our critic pointed out, the author of Oxford's *Europe: A History* is to be admired for more than modesty. Norman Davies has written one of those great books for whom the critics' "must read" verdict should be truly heeded.

As we have noted in these columns yet again today, the concept of Europe is the cause of almost constant political wrangling and grief. This gripping account of the continent from pre-history to modernity deserves the greatest possible readership among all who would take part in that debate. On Monday *The Times* will begin a series of extracts which, we hope, will give some sense of the work's extent and variety.

The disavowal of novelty with which the book begins refers to the primary research conducted. The quality of interpretation offered is another matter. It would have been understandable if a 1,200-page text like this had become so saturated with the detail of its story that it could not keep up the narrative momentum or examine wider themes. Yet messages are here in abundance — and much literary pleasure too. This is history as both microscope and telescope.

Professor Davies is an uncomfortable companion to anyone with a fixed view of how Europe should develop in the future. While the contours of the past are carefully outlined, there is no attempt to force, let alone reinforce, some single explanation upon the reader. The opposite is true: the aspects that the professor brings to life should provoke thought on all sides, the advocates of heroic and economic history, the supporters of European integration and the stanchest sceptic.

Europe as a widely recognised idea is more modern, hardly 300 years old, than is often imagined. It grew as a secular res-

ponse to the prior failure of unity around a common idea of Christendom. Acquiring a shared culture to match geography has long proved elusive; the drive for closer European Union implies that this condition continues.

Even its borders are not certain; the question of whether Poland, the Baltic states or Russia mark its eastern boundary has raged endlessly — in both the texts of European writers and the travails of those negotiating Nato enlargement. The defining lines of Europe have included those of the Roman Empire, Catholic and Orthodox Christianity, Ottoman Islam, 19th century industrialisation and wine growing.

A particularly long and destructive trend has been the segregation and downgrading of Central, Eastern and Southeast Europe from that part which considers itself "Western". That trend continues in the reluctance to expand the European Union.

Exercises of this comprehensive type are now unusual among scholars. The last example was H. A. L. Fisher's *A History of Europe*, published some six decades ago. When such an enterprise is undertaken now, it takes the form of a vast multi-volume series. These have value as a store of reference but not as a book to be read. Of late, history has become more specialised, largely inaccessible outside a narrow circle, and eschewing the broader story. This creates an excessive desire to collect, but not explain, data. Thus more and more, it seems, is known about less and less.

Modern historiography has many more disturbing tendencies still. The concentration on events — cultural movements, political divisions, and socio-economic change — has been downgraded in favour of a vacuous sense of "empathy". Even worse is the fashion for Post-Modernism which denies the analytic value of "facts" altogether. The Davies testament will bring powerful ideas to all who read it. If it has a similar impact on those who write history, then his triumph would be complete.

FOUNTAINS OF ELEGANCE

How to make a fist of communications ancient and modern

The fountain pen is making a comeback in the age of the laptop. A London saleroom yesterday auctioned more than a thousand lots of pens from around the world, including such inky rarities as a Waterman's doll pen too small for any human handwriting. Tomorrow the Royal College of Art opens an exhibition of pens. And jewellers sell bespoke and state-of-the-art fountain pens at prices so smart that they would make pen-pushers of previous generations blot their copybooks in shock.

This revival of the dry-cleaner's best friend flows against the blue-black tide. Until now the ascent of writing instruments has been from the primitive towards the more efficient and legible. So stone chisel was succeeded by stylus. Then reed pens proved finer and more flexible than quills. Inkwells and steel nibs, often crossed, kept the thumbs of schoolchildren ingrained with ink, and made blotting paper a schoolroom tool as necessary as chalk and blackboard. And then came the fountain pen, an early 18th-century invention as revolutionary for clerical life as the paperclip and the fax. Then László Bíró introduced the age of the

disposable ballpoint that needs no refilling — though even he did not finally solve the inkstain problem. For a ballpoint imploding in the pocket makes a mess even more indelible than a bottle of Indian ink. And finally the keyboard has made all writing mechanical, standardised and accordingly legible.

So why are we reading about this revived fashion for the fountain pen? Partly it may be nostalgia for less pell-mell scribbling times, when an morning could be spent in the writing-room composing a powerful letter in copperplate. And then there is no household object so trivial, from matchboxes to dolls, that cannot become a collectible. In their sleek lines, fountain pens are more beautiful than other old tools. And the modern ones made of platinum and jewels are so expensive that they have become objects of discreet pen-upmanship, like expensive watches.

It is still considered vulgar to display a row of fountain pens in the outside breast pocket of a blazer. But it cannot be long before pen bandits start mugging pedestrians in Bond Street just for the wealth clipped inside their jacket pockets.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Terms of reference for an inquiry into Hamilton affair

From Professor Vernon Bogdanor

Sir, John Major has indicated that he will make all relevant papers available to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards. Sir Gordon Downey, in his investigation of the Neil Hamilton affair (report, October 4), Sir Gordon, however, can do no more than report to the House of Commons Committee on Standards and Privileges on his findings.

The committee has a Conservative majority. Any committee composed of Members of Parliament, however fairly it appears to operate, would not command the full confidence of the public in the present climate. Mr Hamilton can only be cleared and public confidence in the probity of MPs restored by an external inquiry.

The allegations made against Mr Hamilton and others amount, surely, to a crisis of confidence in the parliamentary system which needs proper investigation by a statutory tribunal of inquiry under the 1921 Act.

Such a tribunal can enforce the attendance of witnesses and examine them under oath. It can also authorise those appearing before it to be legally represented. That is the only method, surely, through which a satisfactory and impartial verdict can be reached, one which the Commons would not be able to ignore.

Should the Commons do if Mr Hamilton were not to be cleared but found guilty of serious improprieties and of deceiving, amongst others, the Prime Minister and Sir Robin Butler, the Cabinet Secretary?

The Commons has, in the last resort, the power to expel a member. This power has been used twice since the war, once in 1954 to expel Peter Baker, a convicted forger, who would in any case have been unseated.

The other occasion was in 1947, when Mr Garry Allingham was expelled. He had wrongly told a House of Commons committee that MPs were accepting money for disclosing to the press the proceedings of private party meetings, something of which

he himself was guilty. The Leader of the House presented a motion proposing that he be suspended for six months without pay. But, on an amendment by Quintin Hogg, MP, later Lord Hailsham, Allingham was expelled.

It is significant that Allingham, a Labour MP, was expelled by a House containing a large Labour majority. In those days the Commons strove hard to protect its reputation, even where this involved voting against party lines.

Many will feel that the offences of which Mr Hamilton is accused are more serious than that for which Mr Allingham was expelled.

Yours faithfully,
VERNON BOGDANOR
(Professor of Government),
Brasenose College, Oxford,
October 4.

From Mr Stephen Harrow

Sir, Baroness Turner of Camden appears to have been sacked (report, October 4) for having committed two errors of judgment: first, for openly telling the truth as she sees it, when she would have been better advised to fudge and hedge; second, for openly showing loyalty to an old friend and colleague who has become an embarrassment but who has done nothing illegal, when she would have been better advised to disown him.

The Labour leadership seem anxious to create the impression that instant dismissal is how they would deal with such exhibitions of decency by their frontbenchers if they became our Government. I find that impression unattractive — and very disturbing.

Yours faithfully,
STEPHEN HARROW,
Senior Common Room,
King's College London,
Strand, WC2,
October 4.

From Mr Noel Falconer

Sir, Paying for parliamentary activities is bribery, and accepting inducements corruption. Both require swift and severe punishment.

Defending the accused remains entirely legitimate. Attacking their advocate — Labour's sacking of Baroness Turner — was not justice but an assault upon our system of justice.

Yours sincerely,
NOEL FALCONER,
223 Bramhall Moor Lane,
Hazel Grove,
Stockport, Cheshire,
October 4.

Last chance for Middle East peace?

From Mr Menzies Campbell, QC, MP for Fife North East (Liberal Democrat)

Sir, During the political negotiations to create and maintain an alliance against Saddam Hussein which followed the invasion of Kuwait in 1990 the Western allies rightly and consistently maintained that there was no linkage between that invasion and the unresolved problem of Israel and the Arab world. But the international community also committed itself, once hostilities were over, to a search for peace in the Middle East more dedicated than ever before.

The Oslo agreement was a remarkable, even astonishing, product of that search, based on the principle of land for peace, accepted both by the Palestinians and the Government of Israel. The practical implementation of these agreements under first Mr Rabin and later Mr Peres was neither easy nor always in accordance with the timetable, but that principle remained as a bedrock. The events of the past two weeks are a direct result of Mr Netanyahu's determination to change the principle to one of peace in return for security.

One has only to ask oneself what the Israeli Government's response would have been if Mr Arafat had embarked on a similar effort to depart from principle to understand just how disturbing the Netanyahu proposal is to the Palestinians. It also dangerous-

Dress code

From Mr Ashley Mote

Sir, I believe the answer to Dr A. Freedman's question (letter, September 30) about the origin of the warning XYZ — examine your zip — lies across the Atlantic at least 20 years ago. At that time I was writing and directing sales conferences and business presentations for several international companies and encountered a guest speaker in London who had flown in from Toronto.

He opened his speech thus: "Since I have never spoken to an English audience before, I decided to consult the best book on the subject I could find called *The ABC-XYZ of Public Speaking*. ABC — always be cheerful: XYZ — examine your zip ...", which he then did with a great flourish and to raucous applause. The audience hung on every word after that.

Yours truly,
ASHLEY MOTE,
Langley Court East,
Liss, Hampshire.
September 30.

From Sir Rowland Whitehead

Sir, Zipped trousers? Bah! The gentleman says "OBE" (one button exposed).

Yours sincerely,
ROWLAND WHITEHEAD,
Sutton House, Chiswick Mall, W4.
September 30.

From Mrs Victoria Furber

Sir, The response to "XYZ" is "ABC" — all been checked.

Yours faithfully,
VICTORIA FURBER,
Rosemount, Howburne Lane,
Buxted, East Sussex.
October 1.

From Mr C. R. Cone

Sir, Whistling the tune *Zipped Doo Dah* has usually worked effectively.

Yours faithfully,
CHRISTOPHER CONE,
26 St James's Place, SW1.

Weekend Money letters, page 39

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782-5046.

A safer habitat for Britain's flora

From Mr Roger Smith

Sir, Your superb picture of the snake's-head fritillary meadow heralding the *Flora Britannica* launch (Weekend, September 28) makes a very strong message for the conservation of all Britain's flora. So much of our flora, as in these meadows at Oxford, is maintained by the careful management of the habitat to ensure that our rarest species continue to survive to give pleasure and stimulation to each new generation.

Another key element of these conservation efforts has now been partially assured by the support of the Millennium Fund for Kew's new Millennium Seed Bank at Wakehurst Place in Sussex.

Kew, with the support of collaborating partners in both government and voluntary bodies, has set an ambitious target to ensure that all "bankable" species of the UK flora will have been deposited in the bank by the year 2000. Once safely stored, species can be kept for centuries or even millennia. They can be studied to discover their hidden potential and reintroduced into the wild at any time.

Yours faithfully,
ROGER SMITH
(Head of Species Conservation Unit),
Royal Botanic Gardens,
Kew, Richmond, Surrey.
October 2.

From the Director of Plantlife

Sir, Your leading article on Richard Mabey's splendid *Flora Britannica* understates, in my view, just how appalling the plight of wild plants is in our countryside today because of the widespread and continuing destruction of wild habitats — as typified by the Newbury bypass.

Pace your leader, numbers do matter, if only to measure the scale of habitat destruction and therefore to show how vital it is to conserve what is left. Since the last war, we have lost, for example, 97 per cent of our wild-flower meadows, half our ancient woods, three-quarters of our heaths and 98 per cent of our unique lowland raised bogs.

There is no point in pretending things are getting better or that we are now at some low point in the fortunes of wild plants and habitats after which they will somehow revive unless government and individual attitudes and actions change we shall continue to lose plant communities and species and every year the countryside will be, botanically, poorer than it was the year before.

Flora Britannica is welcome, because in stimulating people to identify and enjoy wild plants it will encourage their conservation. The only worry would be if readers were lulled by its immense wealth of plant lore into thinking that all is well with wild plants in Britain. They are in fact suffering a catastrophe.

Yours faithfully,
JANE SMART,
Director, Plantlife,
The Natural History Museum,
Cromwell Road, SW7.
October 3.

IRA and the Basques

From Professor Emeritus Charles Chadwick

Sir, With regard to your report (September 28) that the Basque separatists have a new hero in Diarmuid O'Neill, is it not difficult to see what the IRA and ETA have in common other than their terrorist activities?

The IRA wants a united Ireland: it wants a disunited Spain. The Basque separatists believe in self-determination for their own region in northern Spain, should they not support the present status of Northern Ireland, where the majority of the population wishes to remain separate from the Irish Republic?

If the IRA believes in self-determination for the people of Ireland as a whole, should it not support the Spanish Government's refusal to allow the Basque minority to create a separate state in northern Spain?

Yours faithfully,

CHARLES CHADWICK,
The Beeches, William Street,
Torphins, Aberdeenshire.
September 29.

Duchess of York

From Dr Andrew Crook

Sir, We should all be grateful to Nigel Lawson for her article (October 1). Many must have been affronted by the public witch-hunt of the Duchess of York. Have we as a people really become so mean?

Yours faithfully,
ANDREW CROOK,
7 Parkhill Walk,
Off Tasker Road, Hampstead, NW3.
October 2.

Animal insights

From Mr Alan Smith

Sir, My late dog was most intelligent (letters, September 12, 16, 24; October 1). All I had to do was open the door, kick him and out he went.

Yours faithfully,
ALAN SMITH,
63 Abbey House,
IA Abbey Road, NW8.
October 1.

OBITUARIES

BETTY GATHERGOOD

Betty Gathergood, curator of Dr Johnson's House, died on September 25 aged 80. She was born on February 18, 1916.

BETTY GATHERGOOD was almost as closely associated with Dr Johnson's house in Gough Square as the great man of letters himself had been. As a child she grew up there, playing with her dolls in the powder room where 18th-century ladies and gentlemen had once dusted their periwigs, or curling up to read her book on the low window seats.

As a young woman she met her future husband there, and it was there, in the high Georgian rooms, that they celebrated their wedding and, later, the christening of their son. As an elderly but still gallant and sprightly woman of 77, she became curator of the house — as her mother and grandmother had been before her — and, fittingly, it was there, at 17 Gough Square, that her friends were gathered last year to celebrate her 80th birthday party.

It was Cecil Harmsworth (later Lord Harmsworth) — the brother of the press barons Lord Northcliffe and Lord Rothermere — who first bought Dr Johnson's House to run it as a charitable trust. As a young man, Harmsworth often used to pass through Gough Square and was shocked to discover that No 17, the house where Samuel Johnson had lived and worked on his dictionary, was due for demolition. Ignoring the warnings of those who advised him against doing so, he purchased the freehold of the house in 1911 and, having restored the building, opened it to the public the next year.

Bertha Phyllis Rowell (as she was before her marriage) first went to live in the house in 1919 when she was only three years old. She was brought over from America where her parents had emigrated after their marriage, but after the death of her father, her mother had returned to London.

Betty's grandmother, Isabelle Dyble, had by this time been curator of Dr Johnson's house ever since it had first been opened to the public. She was living



in the "lodge", a picturesque old-fashioned cottage with brass gaspipes and lead plumbing which had been purpose-built as a home for the custodian. It was she who had looked after and preserved the building throughout the difficult years of the First World War, when, it was said, she had devoted herself to reading Dr Johnson's work, turning for solace at times of need to his prayers or his dictionary. "My old man," as she used affectionately to refer to Johnson, would solve her problems for her; she used to say:

A few years after moving in with her, Betty's mother, Phyllis Rowell, took over the curatorship of 17 Gough Square. She

was to remain in this post for nearly forty years, caring for the house and keeping it open to the public even during the perilous years of the Second World War when it was to almost destroy three times by incendiary bombs.

Indeed, during the war the house became something of a haven for members of the Auxiliary Fire Service, whose valiant task it was to minimise the damage caused by these bombs. With help from friends and financial donations from City firms, Betty and her mother assembled a collection of chairs, beds, mattresses and even a piano, and moved them into the house so that the firemen could rest and find refreshment there.

Many of them, it turned out, were members of the London Symphony Orchestra, and on tranquil nights strains of Handel or Bach could be heard drifting through the darkness of the square.

Edward Gathergood was the name of one of these firefighters and it was there, in 17 Gough Square, that he courted Betty. He carried her as his bride over the threshold of the house in 1942.

On her mother's retirement in 1962, Betty Gathergood did not take over the curatorship immediately. Instead, Margaret Elliot was to serve in this post for more than thirty years. But after her unexpected death in 1993, Betty Gathergood became the third generation of her family to take over custodianship of the house.

Dust and noise pervaded her first years in the post. Although the basement had already been refurbished and the interior decoration overseen, the exterior had to be attended to. War damage had never been repaired. Furthermore, there was severe cracking in the walls of the custodian's cottage which had subsided after major building works in the vicinity. A severe flood in 1993 precipitated the need for this repair work and while it was under way, Betty Gathergood had to move, commuting from Windsor every day.

Unperturbed by the inconvenience, however, she continued to encourage groups of visitors to visit the house. It was said that it was her magnetism, courtesy and infectious enthusiasm for the original occupant of 17 Gough Square — she was a mine of stories — that proved one of the greatest attractions to those who came to see the house.

Meanwhile she was hard at work with Dr Beryl Andrews from Cambridge cataloguing the library and attending to the long-neglected records of other items in the house. She even unearthed a few previously undiscovered historical treasures.

She had completed a substantial amount of this project before she became too ill to continue.

Betty Gathergood's husband predeceased her. She is survived by a son.



Betty Gathergood and the house at 17 Gough Square, off Fleet Street, where Dr Johnson lived and compiled his famous dictionary

SABINE ZLATIN



Sabine Zlatin arriving at the courthouse in Lyons to testify against the former Gestapo chief Klaus Barbie in 1987

Sabine Zlatin, wartime rescuer of Jewish children, died in Paris on September 21 aged 89. She was born in Warsaw on January 13, 1907.

JN FRANCE she was known simply as "the lady of Izieu". Sabine Zlatin saved the lives of more than a hundred Jewish children in southern France during the Second World War: first as a visiting nurse in internment camps, then as the founder of a children's refuge. But it was the memory of a group of those she was unable to save that came to dominate her life: some 40 children taken from her refuge at Izieu in April 1944 and sent to Auschwitz on the orders of Klaus Barbie, the notorious Gestapo chief of Lyons.

Sabine Zlatin was born into a Jewish family, the Schwarts, in Warsaw. In 1923, at the age of 16, she was imprisoned for taking part in a demonstration by the Bund, a Jewish workers' organisation. On her release, she left for France where she met and married an agronomist, Miron Zlatin. The couple ran a poultry farm in northern France, and became French citizens in 1939.

When war broke out, Sabine Zlatin joined the Red Cross and, after the French collapse, went south to serve in a military hospital in Montpellier. Soon, however, she was dismissed from her post under the anti-Semitic laws of the Vichy regime. She began instead to work with the Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants, an organisation aimed to rescue children who were at risk of deportation.

It was an extension of this work that in 1943, at some personal risk, she founded the home at Izieu, a small village about 70 miles east of Lyons. On the hills overlooking the Rhône, a farmhouse in an idyllic setting, it served as a holiday home and refuge for Jewish children, who would then be spirited over the border into Switzerland.

For a while the authorities seem to have turned a blind eye, and Zlatin had managed to smuggle more than 100

children to safety when she was betrayed by a neighbouring farmer. On April 6, 1944, the Nazis arrived, led by Klaus Barbie, the Gestapo chief who became known as the "Butcher of Lyons". More than forty children aged between three and 13 were taken away, together with members of the home's staff, including Miron Zlatin. According to a farmer who witnessed the raid, the children were

"brutally loaded into lorries as if they were sacks of potatoes". Sabine Zlatin was not at Izieu at the time. On discovering what had occurred she attempted to appeal to the Vichy authorities, but was contemptuously turned away. The Roman Catholic Church, too, refused to help. From the Paris suburb of Drancy, most of those taken were shipped to Auschwitz. Miron Zlatin and two of the children were killed

by firing squad in Estonia. Only one man escaped. For the rest of the war Zlatin was a member of the Resistance, and after the Liberation she helped to resettle people who had been deported. Later she worked as a courier, an artist, and as a dealer and expert in rare books. But most of her energy and all of her passion went into preserving the memory of what had happened at Izieu.

Her greatest desire was to see those responsible brought to justice. In this she was not alone. The fate of the Izieu children was one of the factors that drove the French-Jewish lawyer Serge Klarsfeld and his wife Beate to spend 15 years tracking down Klaus Barbie, who had settled in Bolivia after the war.

When the former Gestapo chief was finally extradited to France in 1987, the charges relating to Izieu were central to the case against him: indubitably crimes against humanity, they were unaffected by any statute of limitations that might by then have prevented his being tried for war crimes. More importantly, there was documentary evidence linking Barbie to the raid on the home, in the form of a detailed report actually recording the raid's completion and sent to Gestapo headquarters in Paris. Barbie denied being present at Izieu, insisting at first that he had signed the report only "because Eichmann's men were away". He later claimed that the report was forged.

When the case came to trial, Zlatin was in Lyons to testify, and to hear Serge Klarsfeld recite, one by one, the names of the children and details of their lives: George Haipern, aged 8; Barouk-Raoul Bentou, aged 12; Joseph Goldberg, aged 12; Maurice Gerenstein, aged 13... "For 43 years," Zlatin said, "I have carried Izieu in my heart. For the crime of Izieu, for this crime, there can be neither forgiveness nor forgetting."

Barbie was sentenced to life imprisonment; he died in 1991. Twice a year Zlatin returned to Izieu to honour the children, whose deaths were marked by a simple monument in front of the house, inscribed with their names. When the farm eventually came up for sale, she founded an association to buy it and turn it into a memorial museum. This was inaugurated in April 1994 by President Mitterrand, and contains all the letters, photographs and documentation that Zlatin could find, as well as drawings by the children.

Lord Clydesmuir, KT, CB, MBE, former Governor of the Bank of Scotland and Lord Lieutenant of Lanarkshire, died on October 2 aged 79. He was born on May 21, 1917.

DEBONAIR and with an erect military bearing and clipped white moustache, Ronnie Clydesmuir cut a distinguished figure in many aspects of Scottish life. His business enterprises were extensive and his charitable projects numerous. His military record was substantial and his service to the county of Lanarkshire undoubted. He served as Lord-Lieutenant of the county from 1963 to 1992.

Ronald John Bilsland Colville, 2nd Baron Clydesmuir, was the only son of John Colville, 1st Baron Clydesmuir, a former Secretary of State for Scotland, and Governor of Bombay (who was three times acting Viceroy of India in the interim period between Viceroys).

The Colville family dates back to the early 1500s and originally had its seat in Roxburghshire. But Colvilles were long associated with Lanarkshire and, beside his political career, Ronnie Clydesmuir's father was a director of the family steelmaking firm, David Colville and Sons, which contributed much to the industrial history of Scotland. Ronnie himself was later to be involved in this enterprise as a director.

He was educated at Charterhouse and Trinity College, Cambridge. He served in the Second World War with the Cameronians and was mentioned in dispatches. In 1944 he was appointed MBE.

Later, from 1953 to 1956, he commanded the 6th/7th Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) in the Territorial Army and was the recipient of the Territorial Decoration. He served as this regiment's honorary colonel from 1967 to 1971, and as president of the Lowlands of Scotland TA & VR Associations from 1968 to 1973. His business enterprises

were widespread. He was a deputy governor of the British Linen Bank, 1966-71, and of the Scottish Provident Institution from 1954. He was a director and then Governor of the Bank of Scotland. He also served as a director of, among several other companies, Barclay's Bank.

His charitable interests focused on physical education. He was chairman of the Scottish branch of the National Playing Fields Association, a trustee of King George's Fields Foundation and King George's Jubilee Trust, and president of the Scottish Council of Physical Recreation.

Lord Clydesmuir served as a member of the Royal Company of Archers (The Queen's Bodyguard for Scotland) which he joined in the year of the Coronation, and of which he ultimately became Captain-General. Lady Clydesmuir handed back his Gold Stick to the Queen at Holyroodhouse in July 1996.

He succeeded to the title in October 1954 when his father died on the operating table after a pair of scissors had been left inside him.



ON THIS DAY

October 5, 1896

The artistic glass, tiles, wallpaper and furnishings which William Morris (1834-96) produced, combined with his literary work, presented a dual existence to the public — poems by Morris, the wallpaper maker; wallpapers by Morris, the poet.

One who has witnessed the Arts and Crafts Exhibitions, which he helped to promote will deny that he possessed and effectively used a remarkable diversity of gifts. To these he added a strenuous and outspoken English nature such as rarely combines with the typical artistic temperament...

We have referred to his poems as his best work, and might justify the epithet on the ground that they are *oेरे perenni*, while the concrete productions of his factory must needs perish in process of time, or be debased by the imitations of inferior art. But we do not know that Morris himself would have taken this

Service dinners and dinners

Service dinners

RN College Greenwich

Lord Irvine of Lairg QC, was the guest of honour at the annual dinner of the Royal Navy Baristers held last night at Selsley House, Winchester. Lieutenant-Colonel H.D.H. Keating presided.

Royal Hampshire Regiment Brigadier R.G. Long attended the annual dinner of the Royal Hampshire Regiment Officers' Association held last night at Selsley House, Winchester. Lieutenant-Colonel D.H. King-Hamilton, President of the Liverpool Scottish Officers' Association, Captain Edgar Chavasse, President of the Liverpool Scottish

Officers' Association, with members and regimental guests dined last night at Forbes House, Cheltenham, to replicate a dinner held by the Officers of the Battalion in October 1916 at the Chateau Elverdinge, near Ypres, to honour the award of the Victoria Cross to Captain Noel Chavasse, Major D. Evans, chairman, presided. Among others present were:

Lieutenant-Colonel Ian Fraser, VC; Lieutenant-Colonel D. Taiter (Commanding Officer, 5th/9th Battalion); Captain R.J. Murphy (Commanding Officer, 208 (Liverpool) Field Hospital RAMC).

Dinners

Old Oxford Circuit

The President of the Family Division attended a reunion dinner of former members of the Old Oxford Circuit held last night at the Middle Temple, to courtesy of the Treasurer and Masters of the Bench, to mark the 25th anniversary of the demise of the circuit. His Honour Alan King-Hamilton,

chairman, and Mr Ray Farrell, chief executive, entertained members and their guests at dinner last night at the Savoy Hotel after the annual conference held at Lincoln's Inn and a reception at Farre and Company's offices.

Incorporation of Weavers, Fullers and Shearmen of Exeter

Mr R.L. Persey, Master of the Incorporation of Weavers, Fullers and Shearmen of Exeter, the Wardens and the Court of Assistants were the hosts at a dinner held last night at Tuckers' Hall, Exeter, in honour of the Deputy Mayor of Exeter.

Cranfield University

Lord Kings Norton, Chancellor of Cranfield University, was the host at a dinner held last night at Woburn Abbey to mark the university's 50 years as a seat of learning. Viscount Caldecote, Field Marshal Lord Vincent of Colehill and Professor Frank Hardley, Vice-Chancellor, also spoke.

British Association for Sport and Law

Mr Tom Bruce Jones to be a non-executive Forestry Commissioner, in succession to Mr Terence Mallinson.

Appointments

Mr Peter Moynihan to be Chairman of the Police Complaints Authority. He has been a deputy chairman since April 1991.

British Association for Sport and Law

Mr Edward Grayson, President of the British Association for Sport and Law, Mr Maurice Watkins,

Officers' Association

Captain Edgar Chavasse, President of the Liverpool Scottish

NEWS

Major defends talks on EMU

■ Britain must stay in the single currency negotiations to prevent the rest of Europe fudging the terms of entry and creating a failed monetary union that would be a disaster for the country, John Major writes in *The Times* today.

The Prime Minister offers a detailed defence of his "wait and see" approach so as to prevent next week's Tory conference descending into a battle over the issue Pages 1, 14, 20, 21

Prince sacks private secretary

■ Commander Richard Aylard, the Prince of Wales's private secretary, is to leave his post early next year. Although the parting was by mutual agreement, it was clear that he had effectively been dismissed Page 1

Cocaine charge

President Clinton was accused of being a heavy cocaine user in the 1980s before his first presidential debate Page 1

Trial for Brady

Karren Brady, managing director of Birmingham City football club, was committed for trial on charges of advertising misleading prices for away match tickets Page 1

Gunman's 'licence'

A disturbed gun enthusiast who lost his firearms certificate had lawful access to his weapons at a gun club Page 1

Fertility check

The specialist who treated Mandy Allwood, who lost all eight babies, wants new rules to control fertility treatment for women Page 5

Prescott rallies party

John Prescott put Labour on election footing with a declaration that "victory is within our grasp after 17 long years" Page 11

Homes grow in value as gardens bloom

■ House owners seeking to improve their property now tend to spend on the garden rather than fit a kitchen, the Halifax says. Those selling their homes also regard security features, fitted bedrooms and conservatories as desirable extras Page 10

Insight into juries

The new Lord Chief Justice backs a change in the law to allow research into how juries reach their verdicts Page 6

Power of healing

Women priests, far from dividing the Church of England, have helped to foster a new spirit of reconciliation Page 9

Sultan's homecoming

Yemen, in a sharp break with earlier anti-royalist sentiment, has welcomed back Sultan Ghalib al-Qaifi, forced into exile by Britain 29 years ago Page 12

Leader's torment

Afghans are drawn to the site where former President Najibullah was left hanging Page 13

Surgery for Pope

The Pope, 76, enters hospital tomorrow for his sixth operation in his 18 years as pontiff; this time for an appendectomy Page 16

NATURE NOTES

Peter Brookes
5 x 96**Large Pink (*Currencis singularis*)**

Much fancied for sausage meat at the Bournemouth Show, but is proving a hardy swine and could save its bacon.

OPINION

Major's maybe Britain's interests may soon be best served by abandoning ambiguity. But a public refusal to join EMU, in order to win cheers at the seaside, would be wrong Page 21

Europe — a history Norman Davies's testament will bring powerful ideas to all who read it Page 20

OBITUARIES

Betty Gathergood, curator of Dr Johnson's House; Zabina Slafkin, rescuer of Jewish children; Lord Clydesdale, former Governor of the Bank of Scotland Page 23

Simon Jenkins: The "girl in pearls" has gone the way of the debutante Page 20

John Major: We cannot yet know how much economic convergence will have been achieved. Or whether participants will have achieved flexibility to deal with structural unemployment Page 20

Norwich Union: Norwich Union has launched an investigation into allegations that financial advisers are encouraging carpetbaggers to make fraudulent backdated applications for new policies in order to take advantage of the flotation Page 48

Economy: The economic effects on Britain if it chose to leave the EU would be marginal Page 25

Markets: The FT-SE 100 rose 24.8 points to close at 4,024.8. Sterling fell to \$1.67 after a fall from \$1.5659 to \$1.5633 and to DM2.3914 Page 28

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Cricket: Shahid Afridi, a Pakistan teenager, scored a century from 37 balls Page 48

Tennis: The top two Britons, Tim Henman and Greg Rusedski, are in the semis of tournaments in Lyons and Singapore Page 48

Work of Art: French playwright Yasmina Reza is nervous about the opening of her hit *Art* Page 17

People's priorities: Lord Gowrie's protests about shrinking subsidies are years behind Page 17

Play time: Writer Martin McDonagh, at 26, has two plays opening in the West End. So a little arrogance can be forgiven ... Page 19

Gene's genius: Gene Wilder is doing his best to transform Neil Simon's fortunes in *Laughter on the 23rd Floor* Page 19

VISION

Gazza's game: A year in the life of Paul Gascoigne Monday, Channel 4, 9pm

Tonight: Crossing the Floor, BBC2, 9.30pm

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Pure Jaguar: The XK8 beats Porsches very comfortably

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Norwich Union: Norwich Union has launched an investigation into allegations that financial advisers are encouraging carpetbaggers to make fraudulent backdated applications for new policies in order to take advantage of the flotation Page 48

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Gene's genius: Gene Wilder is doing his best to transform Neil Simon's fortunes in *Laughter on the 23rd Floor* Page 19

FORECAST

England and Wales: General: England and Wales will have a sunny start but showers will develop later, becoming more frequent. Any showers in the west will soon die out, while those in the east become lighter. Scotland and Northern Ireland mainly dry and sunny at first, apart from showers over north and east Scotland. These will die out as patchy rain spreads across northermost parts of Scotland. More rain is expected later in northwestern areas.

Scotland and Northern Ireland: Breezy, and rather cold everywhere.

London, SE, SW, NW, Cumbria, W & York & Dales: Dry and sunny. Wind strong, gusty.

North & East England: Dry and sunny. Wind strong, gusty.

Wales: Dry and sunny. Wind strong, gusty.

Midlands: Dry and sunny. Wind strong, gusty.

East Midlands: Dry and sunny. Wind strong, gusty.

West Midlands: Dry and sunny. Wind strong, gusty.

South West: Dry and sunny. Wind strong, gusty.

South East: Dry and sunny. Wind strong, gusty.

Scandinavia: Dry and sunny. Wind strong, gusty.

Central Europe: Dry and sunny. Wind strong, gusty.

Eastern Europe: Dry and sunny. Wind strong, gusty.

North Africa: Dry and sunny. Wind strong, gusty.

South Africa: Dry and sunny. Wind strong, gusty.

North America: Dry and sunny. Wind strong, gusty.

South America: Dry and sunny. Wind strong, gusty.

Australia: Dry and sunny. Wind strong, gusty.

New Zealand: Dry and sunny. Wind strong, gusty.

Antarctica: Dry and sunny. Wind strong, gusty.

Other areas: Dry and sunny. Wind strong, gusty.

Outlook: Dry at first in south. Rain in north extending southeast on Monday.

FORECAST

England and Wales: Showers, dying out. Light rain for a time in the afternoon. Wind northwesterly turning southwesterly, mostly strong.

Scotland: Showers, dying out. Wind west. Wind strong, gusty.

North & East England: Showers, dying out during the day. Wind strong, gusty.

Midlands: Showers, dying out during the day. Wind strong, gusty.

South West: Showers, dying out during the day. Wind strong, gusty.

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GARDENING



On Apple Day, some healthy advice for growers

Page 4

PLUS: Your questions answered, page 5

TRAVEL

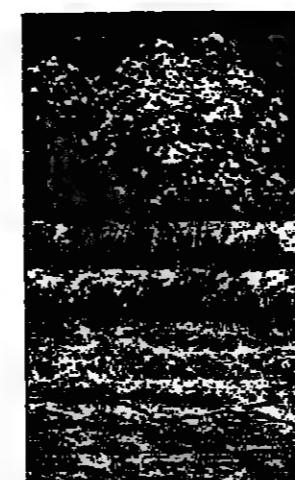


The best in skiing this winter, starting with France

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Save £5 on the new definitive guide to our wild flora

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Special deals are tempting first-time buyers

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WEEKEND

THE TIMES SATURDAY OCTOBER 5 1996

FRANCES BISSELL'S RECIPE FOR THE PERFECT DINNER PARTY



I have friends who say they never give dinner parties any more. They "invite people for supper". But go to their house for "supper" and it's a glass of bubbly pressed into your hand before you have time to get your coat off. When the time comes to eat, the dining table sparkles with china and crystal. The candles are lit, the white wine is brought out, properly chilled, and something red and glorious is served with the main course, as well as something delicious with the pud, or pudds.

Before that, there will be carefully chosen cheeses, and sometimes, even home-made bread. I call this a dinner party. Why all this inverted snobbery about a name?

We read much in the style pages about the demise of the dinner party; friends now meet for supper at one another's homes, eating informally at the kitchen table, dining off dishes quickly unpacked from M&S. Or they meet and go Dutch in the latest fashionable mega-restaurant. Perhaps this gives the game away. These anti-dinner party souls

HOW TO WIN THE TIMES COOK IN YOUR KITCHEN SEE PAGE 2

live in cities, where there is a "latest fashionable restaurant" to which they go. But not all metropolitans are anti-dinner party, and not all kitchen suppers are dressed-up

convenience food. A few weeks ago, staying overnight with friends, we were told that Saturday evening was to be a kitchen supper for the four of us, Saturday lunch having been for 16 people. The food was simple and delicious and yes, convenient, in its way — figs and prosciutto, a creamy fish pie and leftover summer pudding. But the vintage Bollinger was followed by 1980 Bâtard-Montrachet from two different single vineyards.

Why do we actually give dinner parties? Is

it to network? To impress people? To make matches? I'm afraid I have never progressed beyond the stage of simply wanting to invite friends in for good food and wine. A couple we had not known for very long were, I know, disappointed to come for dinner with us and find no one to network with.

For whatever reason, and no matter how often it is labelled "unfashionable", the dinner party is alive and often elaborate.

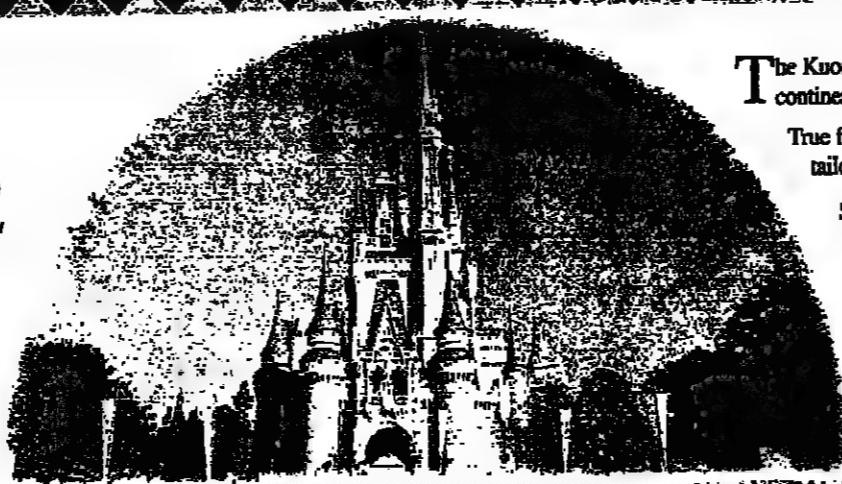
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FOOD 3 GARDENING 4 SHOPPING 7 PROPERTY 11,12 PETS 13 BOOKS 14,15 GOING OUT 16,17 TRAVEL 19-25 GAMES 27

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INSIDE STORY

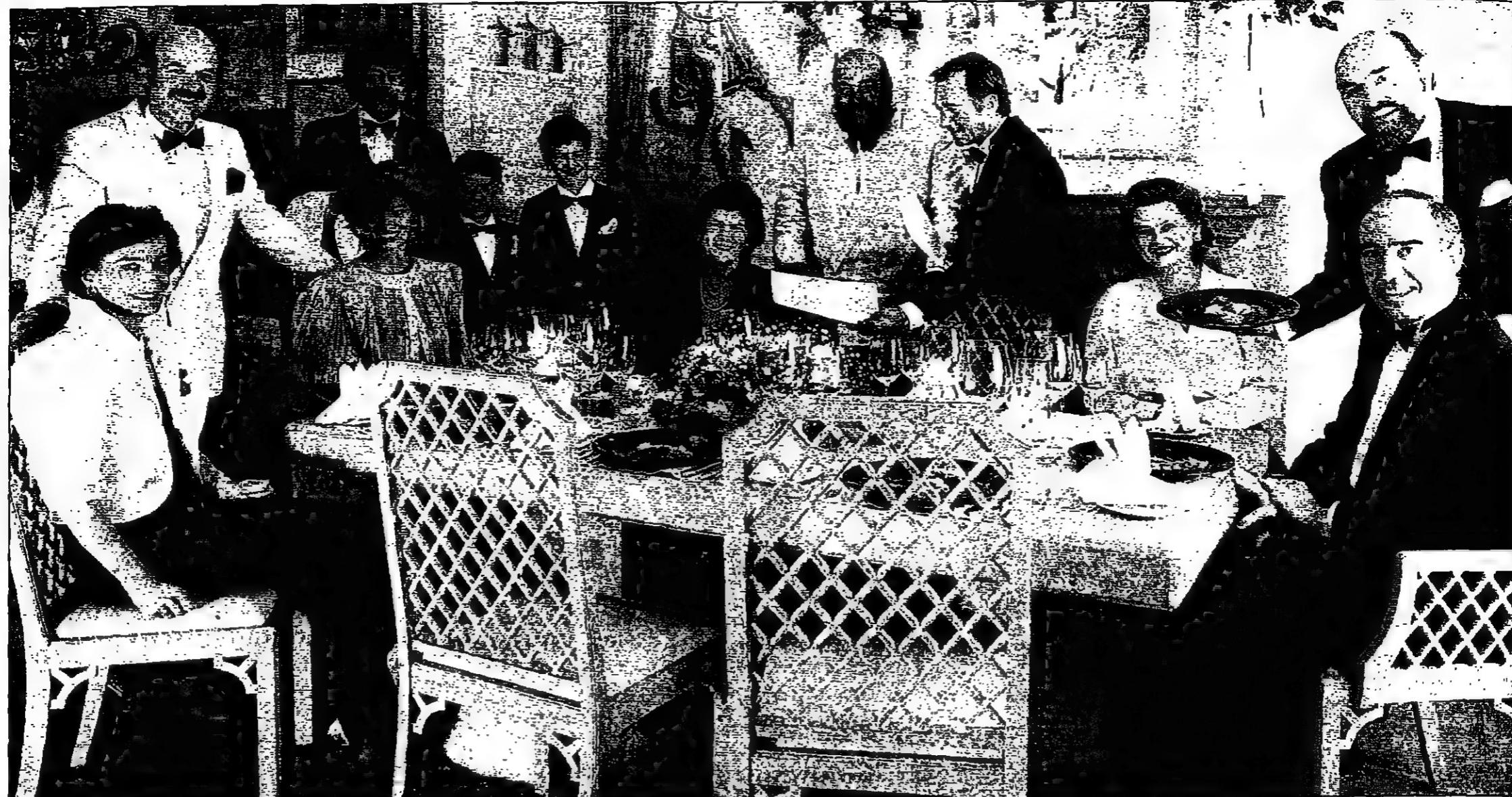
'I hope the invitation says come hungry, come thirsty and come in a taxi'

Continued from page 1
In London, The Brides Book department at Peter Jones, the experts on such matters, confirm that all the accoutrements of the dinner party are still sought-after wedding presents, although grandeur and opulence has given way to simplicity and clean lines, and more informal dinnerware is being sold. By all accounts, the New York dinner party scene is thriving and quite often to be found entertaining members of new Labour.

Whole shops in Paris are devoted to "l'art de recevoir" and the glossies are full of glamorous recipes for entertaining. And, judging by the letters I receive, readers of *The Times*, everywhere are staunch dinner-party people. Special occasions are planned weeks, if not months, in advance, recipes are tested and menus are carefully planned. Sometimes I get frantic letters saying: "A year or two ago, you gave a marvellous recipe for such and such, which we all liked very much. I want to serve it next week for a dinner party, but I can't find the recipe. Help!"

At home, I have been cooking for friends for many years, more than 20 of them documented in a series of food diaries. At the end of each year, I buy a French household agenda and use it to make a note of what I cook every day, what is in season, how much it costs, and an occasional shopping list. I started doing this long before I became a food writer, and it has proved useful. I do like to check that I am not planning to give friends the same main course they ate the last time, and Tom, my husband, always wants to know what wine he served.

Food and wine, although an essential element, are not the only consideration. There is, for want of a better word, etiquette. Life is too short, and we are all too busy to spend three or four hours in uncongenial company. In the days of casual telephone invitations, pitfalls await the unwary. "Are you free on Friday evening?" You say yes, and then you hear, "and we thought we would invite X and Y". You can't stand X and Y, but it is too late to back out. A better approach might be: "We are inviting X and Y for dinner next Friday, and we wondered if you would be free to come, too?" There is now enough time for an inventive and face-saving excuse. I cannot recommend this ploy too highly. A friend told me that once she was left sitting at a dinner party in the realisation that her husband was never going to return from a visit to the lavatory. It was summer, and he had been overwhelmed by the sight of the open front door and the garden gate, a much more attractive prospect than returning to sit beside a particularly difficult guest.

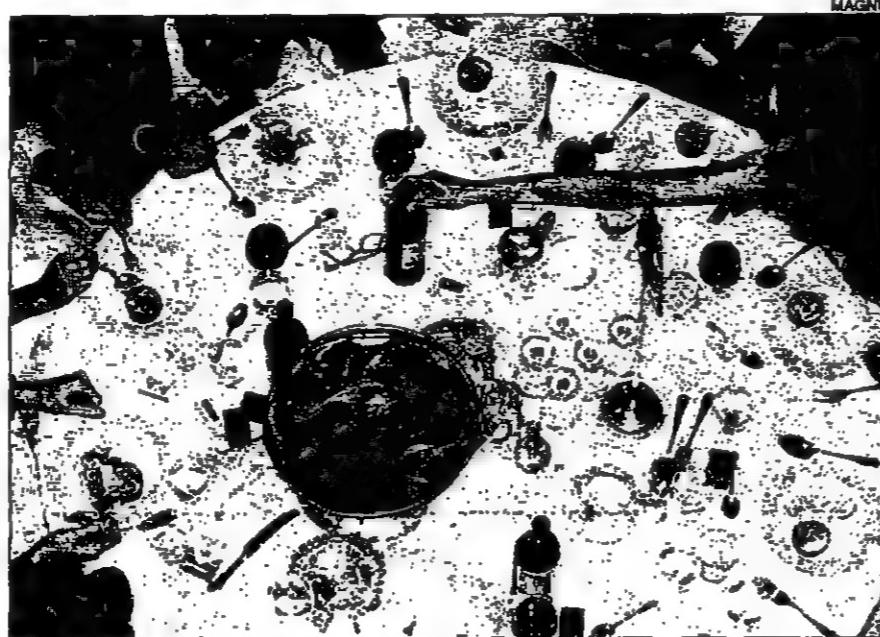


The most daunting dinner guests in the world? Frances Bissell once cooked for chef Anton Mosimann (standing, far left), his wife Kathrin and their guests, who included Nico Ladenis, chef patron (with dish, far right)

My husband says that two expatriates should never be seated next to each other at a dinner party. If they wanted to talk to their countrymen, they would return home. Expats are not tourists; they secretly want to belong.

Is there anything you can't eat or drink, is a question I always ask if somebody is coming to dinner for the first time. When people answer on behalf of others, they do not, however, always get it right. Who would have thought melon would be a problem. Once I served melon sorbet to some friends, and after smelling it, one of our guests turned quite funny and had to leave the room. His companion had told me earlier in the day that he could eat anything. On another occasion, a food writer friend was bringing a well-known television cook from America for dinner. Do ask her if there is anything she can't eat, I said. "Oh, don't worry darling, she's a foodie, and can eat anything," he replied. But one look at her face, when I served a heap of mussels, told me otherwise. Smoked salmon came to the rescue though. I wish I could claim always to be so organised.

It is as well to stay relaxed



Not all Metropolitans are anti-dinner party — and not all hostesses are models of perfection

and flexible so that when disaster occurs, you are not so tightly wound up that you snap. I will never forget inviting two serious and important food people for dinner one evening. As a main course, I had planned roasted veal kidneys with a Roquefort sauce, an idea developed from a dish that I once ate at Le Cochon

d'Or in Paris. I thought I would get a little *mise-en-place* out of the way, and, having made the sauce, I decided to half roast the kidneys, and finish them off at the last minute, but I cooked them beyond that point of perfect pinkness. What do? It was after 6.30 already. I didn't have a freezer, from which to pull out a delectable little standby, and the late-night corner shop had only miserable looking steaks and chops. Tom, who is always looking for a new pasta creation, suggested I make some pasta, chop the kidney, and with the addition of herbs and spice, and a little ricotta, make tortelloni, which I did, and served it with the Roquefort sauce. I do not recommend, however, planning to make fresh pasta an hour before

your guests appear, but it does provide a good solution.

Some years ago, at a charity dinner for the Académie Culinaire, I offered, as a prize in the raffle, to cook dinner for the highest bidder and five friends.

It was both gratifying and somewhat overwhelming at the end of the bidding, to realise that I would be cooking dinner for the chef Anton Mosimann and his wife Kathrin and their guests, including, I later discovered, the chef patron Nico Ladenis and his wife, Dinah-Jane. I had decided on oriental salmon wontons for appetisers, followed by fennel and champagne risotto, and then pot-roast quail, stuffed with black and white pudding as the main course, farmhouse

cheeses, and to finish, a version of summer pudding, using tropical fruit, which I thought a very clever idea. Hal. There is such a thing as trying to be too clever.

The dinner was for Sunday night, and on Sunday morning, I had a peek at the individual puddings I had made the night before. Bread slices had been replaced with sponge, tart summer berries were replaced with diced mango, guava, and papaya with passion fruit juice. It tasted dull and bland, and it was falling to pieces, since tropical fruit has no pectin to hold together. Still with no freezer to fall back on, I had to look to the local shops for the solution. New season's Spanish strawberries, yoghurt, ricotta and cream and just enough time enabled me to make *coeur à la*

bag of white flour was what he got. On the other hand, a bottle from a fine cellar is more than welcome, especially when it is given to be put away for a rainy day.

What is the perfect number of guests? I am happy cooking for a foursome. Six is fine, too, but eight tends to break up into two parties. Five is my absolute ideal number.

People often ask me if Tom and I get invited back, meaning, I suppose, that some people might be reluctant to invite the scrutiny of a television cook. I would like to say we do, but, as Tom says, when guests are into their second bottle of claret, they will do anything, even: "You must come to our place soon." He sometimes wonders, does "soon" mean next month, next year, or indeed the next century. But, when the invitation does arrive, I hope it says: "Come hungry, come thirsty, and come in a taxi."

Frances Bissell's recipes for busy cooks: Magazine, page 89

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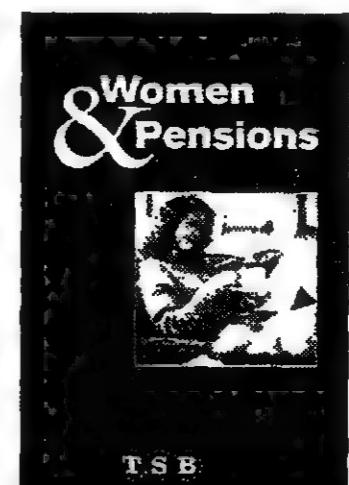
Here are the three questions:

1. Which country do you associate with lasagne verde?
2. What ingredient is used to create the "islands" in îles flottantes?
3. Which ground spice is produced from the outer casing that grows on nutmeg kernels?



Frances Bissell, The Times Cook, has written nine cookery books

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FOOD

3

For those who used to like bread and dripping, here's the recipe for a truly flavourful meat dish that may shock the muesli martyrs

This being the party conference season, it is time to sling a few bogey words around — socialism, poll tax, Clause 4. You know them as well as I do; they were all once embraced, but are now shovelled on to the back burner, the gas turned down, and allowed to become cold and indigestible.

Can I hurl another couple of embarrassing bogies at you? They are foods which we once held dear and are now too ashamed to contemplate. They stare up at us from the butcher's slab with demoniac eyes. They are beef and pork fat.

Beef first. People are becoming coy about their beef habits. To boast of being a beef-eater these days is to risk the pitiful glance that the early muesli martyrs gave to those who remained faithful to the fry-up. There may well be nervous families huddling round a bit of rump at this very moment, curtains closed in case the neighbours spot the mustard jar, put two and two together and start throwing stones.

Beef-eating is bad enough, but what about pig fat? Is there anyone left in this country who will stand up and declare

Why I've no beef about pork fat

themselves to be fond of a bit of bread and dripping? You might as well call for the stringing up of cats. Somehow, we have been persuaded it is lethal, clogs the arteries and gums up the works — which it may well do if taken to excess. But what has happened to a sense of moderation? Throw out with the bathwater, and the pork chops with a nice bit of fat on them.

Of course it is not many years since there existed a breed of pig, widely farmed in Dorset, which was called the "ice-cream pig". These pigs were bred to have plentiful back-fat, which was removed at slaughter and processed into ice-cream. Do you remember that glum warning which said "this product contains non-dairy fat"? Did you know exactly how far removed from the dairy it was? I did not believe this when first told, but then a farmer said to me: "Why do you think Walls used to make bacon and pork pies?" So, 25 years ago, you and I

strolled along the proum clutching a cornet, licking at our processed pork fat and thinking wed never had it so good.

Stunning all modern food fancies, and with the bravery of a man standing up at the Tory party conference calling for a tax on blue rinse, I offer a dish which fulfils all the requirements of the modern, aphobic eater while actually bringing together these two bogey ingredients, beef and pig fat. But I warn you, you will have to be brave, and trusting.

I have recently returned from the southwest of France and, pining somewhat for the robust food, my hand fell on Paula Wolpert's *The Cooking of Southwest France*, in which she introduces

double-degreasing. Veteran motorists will remember a technique for getting elderly cars over hills, called double-declutching. Well, this recipe for "Daube for Early September" will get you over the Fear-of-Fat hump that has been keeping you from some truly great dishes. It takes two slow days to cook, and some occasional delicate attention.

Buy a 3lb silverside of beef. It is a dense, meaty cut with little fat, and is cheap. If there is any fat to be seen on it, remove it. Now, cause your butcher to rock back on his heels by asking for 3lb of pork back-fat with rind. You may be the first person in the last ten years to make such a request. This is cheap, too; I paid 95p.

Cut the silverside into half-inch slices, having rubbed the joint with plenty of black pepper, but not too much salt. Remove the rind from the pork back-fat (while marvelling that man once devised a way of turning this into something that could be eaten with a chocolate flake) and then cut the fat into chunks and, using a food processor, turn it into a thick paste, while adding a chopped onion or shallot, parsley, garlic and pepper. It is not terribly attractive.

L ine a heavy, cast-iron casserole with the pork rind — the skin side must be inwards or it will stick — and then put a layer of beef, a layer of the pork fat mixture, and another of beef, till you have used all the ingredients.

Take a bottle of strong red wine and boil it for 15 minutes till it has lost the alcohol (heartbreaking) and then add to the casserole. Put on a tight-fitting lid,

and place in a slow oven. After six hours, remove it and allow to cool without the lid. The disgusting, flabby pork fat will have risen to the top of the dish, there to await removal by you, patiently, with a teaspoon.

Spare no effort to remove every trace. But, although this is the point at which we say goodbye to the pig fat, it will have left behind those subtle but vital flavours that only animal fat can give to food. Then back into the oven for another hour, another cooling, a further fat hunt. Now you can remove the cool, clean beef slices to a serving dish.

Strain the remaining juice to remove even more fat and rind, and then reduce the juice till you have a sauce. You can even skim this to ensure that — watch my lips — there is *hardly any fat left* in this dish. Yet I promise you will find more depth, subtlety and honest flavour in these slices of beef than you ever thought meat could contain.

If you try this in winter, save the fatty pork rind for the birds. And reserve a snug look of pity for those misguided souls who think fat-free must mean bland.

Paul Heiney

Coffee exotica

I HAVE BEEN bombarded with news about exotic coffees. Whirlwinds, which has just launched a "Get Real" campaign encouraging us to drink proper coffee, has as its *Coffee of the Month* an Elephant Ears Coffee (so called, you will be relieved to hear, because of the shape of the beans), while Taylors of Harrogate has brought out a connoisseur range, including Tanzanian Kilimanjaro Mountain, Cuban Havana Gold, and a South African arabica coffee.

All this is good news for the thrillphiles among you who need their palate tickled by new and exciting products, but, as I learn from two newcomers to the coffee scene, Jeremy Torz and Stephen Macatonia, this week, the origin of the beans is not as significant as the type of roast and the freshness of the coffee.

I tasted their basic Kenya coffee at their microastery (the caffeine equivalent of a microbrewery) in Essex, and it was a revelation: fresh, crisp and zesty. I can think of nothing better to start the day.

T&M have a theory that certain coffees suit different times of day, mood and even styles of cooking. Most of their business is in designing exclusive blends for leading London restaurants: the River Café, for example, has a strong, dark, typically Italian espresso; Pied à Terre, a French restaurant, a much lighter, more elegant blend; while the new Oxo Tower restaurant has an attention-grabbing, highly aromatic style of coffee.

They will also supply to private customers by mail order (0181-500 2195). Beans are roasted and, if you wish, ground to order. If you want to appreciate the beans at their best you should use them within a fortnight, though you can keep them in the freezer for a little longer. If you want to experiment, T&M offer three different 227g (8oz) sampler packs for £12.50 to £15.25, plus £3.50 p&p. And, yes, they

do have some exotic ones. Thrillphiles should try the Yemen Mocha Maimari which has — how shall I put it? — a farmyard quality not dissimilar to a good burgundy.

Plum role

THOSE who feel oppressed by the size 10 figures of most television food presenters should tune in next Wednesday to *Two Fat Ladies*, the first of a BBC2 six-part series featuring the outsize figures and personalities of cookery writers Jennifer Paterson and Clarissa Dickson Wright. Not only are the ladies large but they're utterly un-PC. They advocate (in cut-glass Roedean accents) limpid use of cream (Paterson: "I like rich food. None of this nonsense about yoghurt instead of cream"), they rubbish vegetarians, call scallops "charming little fellows" and produce dishes that would feed a small army.

If you actually want to pick up any solid culinary information, you'll have to buy the book of the series (published by Ebury Press at £17.99), which includes guidance on cooking a whole beast on a spit ("surprisingly cheap way of catering which always causes excitement"), a recipe for Roast Meat Loaf or "Hedgehog" ("a robust strongly flavoured monster... excellent for picnics, parties, christenings and wakes") and a memorable set of instructions for making a Shooter's Sandwich.

feel for the differences in ingredients and spicing between the regions. My favourites were the Chicken Achari, a creamy aromatic dish from Hyderabad, and the herby Green Chutney Chicken from the Punjab, a muse for coriander (and mint) addicts. Considering that the recipes use authentic ingredients and spices such as jaggery, curry leaves, cardamom and amla seeds, they strike me as remarkably reasonable. Most of

Spicy stuff

UNLESS you have a particularly good local Indian restaurant you may do better getting your takeaway off the supermarket shelf. This week saw the launch of a range of regional Indian recipe dishes from Waitrose, which make chicken tikka masala look about as interesting as a Big Mac. There are enough different dishes to give you a real

DIGEST



Fiona Beckett

South of the river, within striking distance of the National Theatre, there is the Oxo Tower Brasserie in Barge House Street (£15.50 for three courses) and the fashionable new fish restaurant Livewait in The Cut (£11 for two courses). The only problem with this

proliferation is that you now need to take as much care selecting your dining venue as you do in picking your production. Mezzanine, for example, boasts a singularly spicy southeast Asian menu that would be an alarming precursor for a visit to the Mousetrap with your elderly aunt but ideal to get you in the mood for *Miss Saigon*.

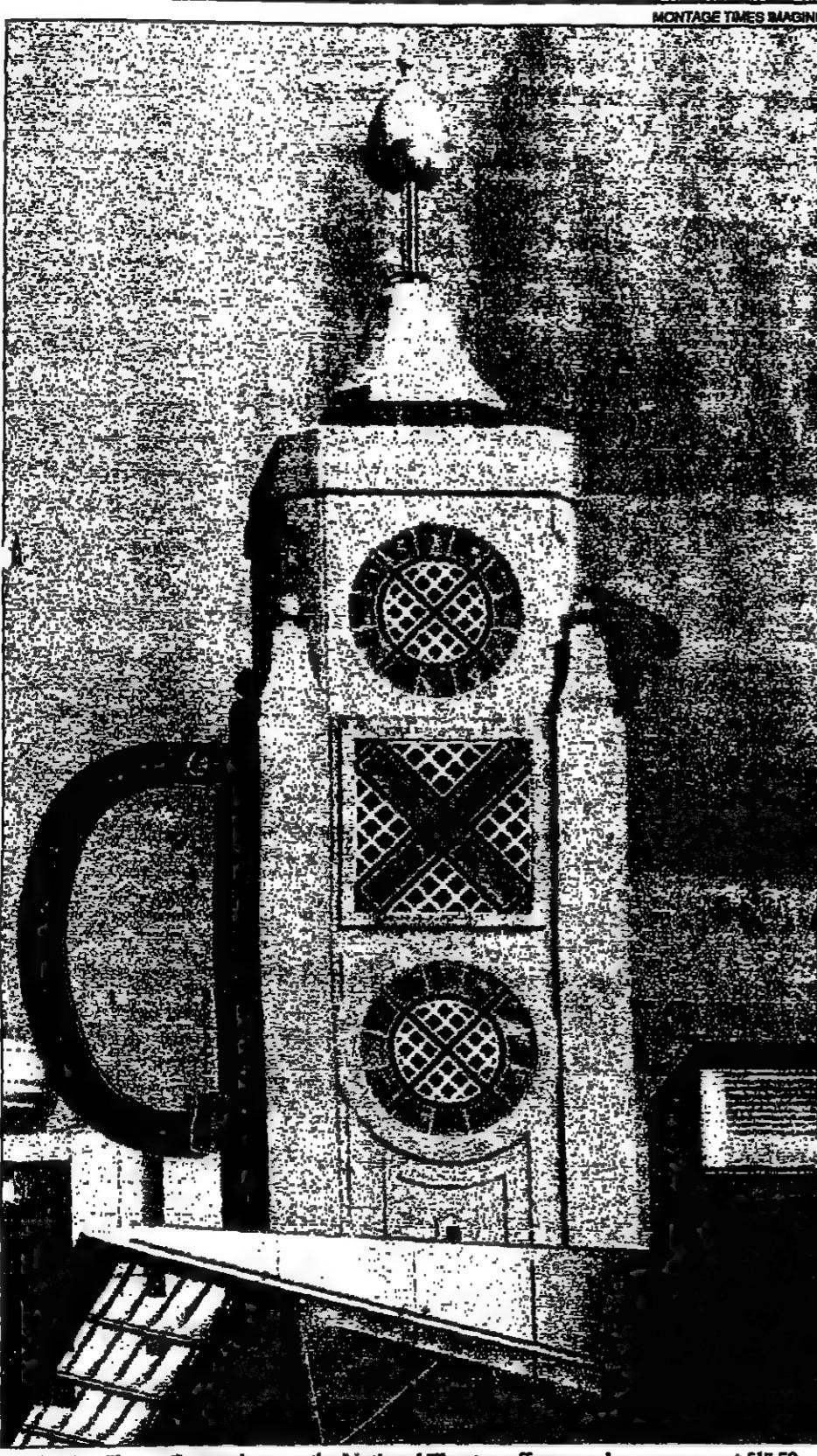
Dished

THE PRIZE for the most pointless product of the week goes to Sorriso Italian-style Risotto alla Milanese, an "instant" risotto on sale at Harvey Nichols in London at £2.25 for a one to two portion pack. Described as a "fast delicious meal" it actually takes 17 minutes of standing over the stove and stirring — exactly what you do when making the real thing. You'd do better with Marks and Sparks Italian-style Mushroom Risotto at £1.49, which you can heat in the microwave in a two-and-a-half minutes.

More food and drink in the Magazine

**NATIONAL
APPLE DAY:
CRUNCH TIME
FOR YOUR
GARDEN**

Page 4



The Oxo Tower Brasserie, near the National Theatre, offers pre-show suppers at £15.50

CHOCOLATE BOX

HAD ANYONE other than Antonio Carluccio suggested a dish of wild mushrooms, polenta, game and chocolate I would have reached for my chocolate-coated smelling salts. However, I know that Carluccio, the proprietor of Neal Street restaurant in central London, is incapable of doing anything tasteless to his beloved wild mushrooms.

The dish will be offered for one week to celebrate London's first Chocolate Week, from October 19 to 28, organised by the Chocolate Society, which was inspired to stage this event by the Chocolate Convention, which has been held for the past two years in Perugia in the Umbrian region of Italy. Events will be scattered through the capital, and here is a tasty selection.

On October 23 beers will be tasted with Rocco's fine chocolates at the White Horse in Parsons Green, west London, from 6pm (tickets £10). The idea is to marry rich, malty, sweet beers to finely bitter chocolate.

Malt whisky and chocolate is being tasted on October 22 at Milroy's in Greek Street, central London.

At the Ritz, a special chocolate cake will be included in the hotel's tea (£19.50 a head, eat as much as you like from 2-5pm), and if it is as good as they hope it will become a signature cake for the hotel.

A few doors away in Piccadilly at Fortnum and Mason, chocolates will be on sale made by the Italian chocolatiers Paul de Bindi and Andrea Siliti.

The Chocolate Society will be hosting evening tastings of the Krug of chocolate, Valrhona Grand Cru, with Churchill's port, to celebrate the opening of their first shop at 36 Elizabeth Street, SW1W 9NZ.

JANE OWEN

For details of prices and ticket availability during London Chocolate Week call 0171-322 220. Fortnum and Mason chocolates from the shop in Piccadilly or mail order on 0171-215 8040. The White Horse, Parsons Green (advance bookings 0171-730 2159). Neal Street Restaurant 0171-326 8369. The Ritz (0171-493 8181). Milroy's, Greek Street (0171-497 0893).

Evening class in a meal with appeal

FAST FOOD

VEGETARIAN STUDENT SUPPER

Serves 6

Easy tomato, aubergine and spinach lasagne
Baked apples with mincemeat and marzipan

The easiest student supper dishes are cooked in one container. It may be the only large cooking dish available and means minimal washing up, something we all appreciate. Use 1 litre of passata and 8 sliced tomatoes instead of the tinned tomatoes and 250g (9oz) mozzarella and 200g (7oz) feta cheese instead of the cheddar for a more expensive version.

MAKE LASAGNE Put 250g washed spinach in a pan and heat it gently for 3-5 minutes, until it has wilted and halved in volume, turning it over once or twice. Trim 4 medium-sized aubergines and cut each of them into four long slices. Cut 250g strong cheddar into small pieces. Pour 1tbs oil over the bottom of a roasting tin. Layer up the ingredients as follows: half the aubergine, the wilted spinach, 6 sheets of lasagne, a 400g (14oz) tin tomatoes, 6 more sheets of lasagne, the rest of the aubergine, another 400g tin chopped tomatoes and the rest of the cheese. Season with black pepper.

Pre-heat the oven to 190C/375F/Gas mark 5.

MAKE APPLES

Cut 6 cooking apples in half, crossways. Cut out the core with a knife (you can cut it all the way through, leaving a hole at the bottom of the apple) and put in an ovenproof dish or tin. Divide 250g (9oz) marzipan into 12 pieces and put in the centre of each apple. Spoon 1/2tbs mincemeat on the top, so that the hole is filled. Cover the dish with tin foil.

Shopping list

- Fruit and vegetables
- 4 medium-sized aubergines
- 250g (9oz) washed spinach
- 6 cooking apples
- 1 large iceberg lettuce
- Dairy
- 250g (9oz) strong cheddar
- 150ml 1/4 pt single cream (optional)
- Store cupboard
- 1tbs vegetable oil
- 12 sheets lasagne
- 2x 400g (14oz) tins chopped tomatoes
- 250g (9oz) marzipan
- 6tbs mincemeat
- 1tbs sugar
- 1tbs vinegar
- 1tbs grainy mustard (optional)
- 4tbs olive or vegetable oil

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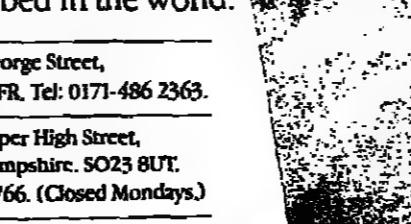
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GARDENING

Gardener's update: Jane Owen on Apple Day, botany courses and the best finds for October

The apple of a nation's eye

Brogdale Horticultural Trust in Kent holds the world's largest collection of apples — 2,300 varieties. This national treasure deserves to be better known. During their Apple Celebration on October 19-21, visitors will be able to tour the 150 acres of orchard and have "fruit doctors" diagnose failing apple trees (bring three apples and a leaf branch) or identify varieties. As a succulent incentive to readers of *The Times*, those who show this column will get 50p off the entrance fee per head, up to a maximum of four people.

Bare-rooted apple trees are for sale for about £10 each — go for Ashmead's Kernel, which was raised by Dr Ashmead of Gloucester in 1700. It is a dessert Russet variety with a rich aromatic flavour, which ripens at the end of October to an attractive greenish-yellow, and should keep until February. Like most of Brogdale's apple trees it can be grafted on to different types of dwarf root stock, depending on the final size of tree.

Apple tasting of any of the 100 or so varieties on display during the celebration is free, and for a mere £1.50 you can buy a carrier bag of your favourite selection. Alternatively, you can sample the apples by checking into a suite at the Ritz (£52, plus VAT per suite per night, excluding breakfast) where guests' fruit bowls include Brogdale apples, plums and other seasonal fruit. Well, at least one national institution is giving a helping hand to its poor relation.

As the holder of the National Collection of Fruit, Brogdale has 500 varieties of pear, 350 of plum, 220 cherry and various currants, gooseberries, meddlers, quinces, cob nuts, strawberries and vines. Anything you buy, from the fruit trees to the unusual preserves (for instance Raspberry Curd £2, 12oz/300g), helps to maintain this part of our heritage, which nearly closed in the 1980s for lack of funding.

The Brogdale Horticultural Trust, Brogdale Road, Faversham, Kent ME13 8XZ celebrates apples on October 19-21, 9.30am-5pm, £2.50, concessions £2, children £1.50.

Brogdale will arrange mail order for large orders of fruit or fruit trees. Contact Gerry Oughton at the above address.

For an information sheet about events nationwide for Apple Day on October 21, write to Common Ground, 44 Earls Court, London WC2H 9LA, preferably with a stamped, addressed envelope.

For the Ritz bookings call 0171-493 8181.



An apple picker harvests one of the 2,300 different varieties of the fruit at Brogdale Horticultural Trust in Kent

Bigger, not best

IN SOME circles at this time of year the My Marrow's Bigger Than Yours syndrome is rife (I hear of a cabbage in Gloucestershire that measures 5ft). In others, Lucifer-and-Mapp-style My Plant's Rarer Than Yours one-upmanship rages. I'm never very

convinced by either: vast vegetables tend to taste revolting and rare plants are sometimes rare for a good reason.

The National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens (NCCPG) fairs usually have a range of unusual plants, often at better prices than garden centres.

Botany day

BRITAIN'S oldest botanic garden, at Oxford, is offering autumn courses. They will be

held in the garden, on the banks of the Isis beside Magdalen Bridge. The courses will be run by garden writers, broadcasters and tutors from the gardens, including the Horti Praefectus, Timothy Walker, who is in charge of the gardens.

The next study day focuses on the winter garden and should include a mention of one of the garden's ferns, *Polypodium vulgare*, whose deep green fronds shimmer with frost on cold winter days.

More information can be obtained from Louise Allen, University of Oxford Botanic Garden, Rose Lane, Oxford OX1 4AX (01865-270000). Study days cost £25, including a sandwich lunch. Evening lectures cost £6 with wine.

Sore knees

STUFF a hotwater bottle full of old tights and use it as a kneelet. This gem comes from Pipa Greenwood's *Gardening Hints & Tips*.

Green — or brown — fingers are held gently but firmly throughout as clear explanations backed up with even clearer photographs tell us how to do everything from pruning to planting. The text and ideas are great. Pity about the presentation. For the hard-of-thinking there is a photograph of a pair of scissors.

Pipa Greenwood's *Gardening Hints & Tips* is published by Dorling Kindersley at £12.99.

Plant fair

TOMORROW the East Midlands Group of the NCCPG holds its first autumn plant fair at Selsley Priory, Underwood, Notts from noon-4pm. Twenty-four nurseries will have stalls, although I doubt they will have anything as wild as a 5½ ft span cabbage.

To get to Selsley Priory take the J27 off the M1 and turn west on the A608, for half a mile. The £1.50 entrance fee includes a visit to the garden. For information contact John Gregory on 01636 525460.



In some circles marrows bring out one-upmanship

PLANT OF THE MONTH

LAWNS are a luxury for those with plenty of time and their own water source but, curiously, it is grass which is taking the place of lawn — specialist grasses which, once established, thrive with little or no water and maintenance and are best planted through a thick layer of gravel or shingle to cut down weeding.

For a failsafe system a layer of black polythene, or any other weed-suppressing membrane available at garden centres, should be laid first with the shingle on top, and the grasses planted through holes in the polythene. *Hakonechloa macra 'Aureola'* is a Japanese grass that makes a stunning display with bright yellow gently arching leaves giving colour until the frosts.

It has three drawbacks: it is deciduous; when it reaches maturity — up to 45cm —

*Hakonechloa*: a specialist grass to replace lawns

some of the leaves bend slightly instead of arching, and nurseries have not been able to keep up with demand. So here is an alternative: *Acorus gramineus 'Ogon'*, a perennial which forms a clump of long leathery gold and green variegated leaves and will tolerate a wide range of conditions. It has many of the good qualities of grass without being a member of the family.

PW Plants, a nursery with a good selection of ornamental grasses, sells them for about £4 a pot. The address is PW Plants, Heath Road, Kemsing, Kent, NR16 2DS (01953 888212).

FIND OF THE MONTH

I AM on the search for garden implements, high and low-tech, which should be more widely used. Last Christmas my aunt gave me a Kirpi, which is marketed as "the ultimate weeding tool". Having hacked, scraped, sawn and grubbed my way around weeds stuck in the heavy clay of London and Oxfordshire I can vouch for it.

The inner blade of the half-moon shape is serrated for cutting through stubborn stems, and a fierce blade at the top of the outer edge hoes weeds effortlessly. The tip of the crescent digs out tap roots. Kirpis can be bought for £9.80, including postage, from Earthworks Trading, A Ashmole, 5 Scientes, Edinburgh EH9 1NH.

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GARDEN ANSWERS



STEPHEN ANDERTON replies to readers' letters

Q My climbing *Hydrangea petiolaris* is more than 20 years old and grows outwards to 3ft deep, encroaching over the path to the front door. Can I prune it so that it will lie flatter but still produce flowers? — Mrs P. Smith, Loughborough.

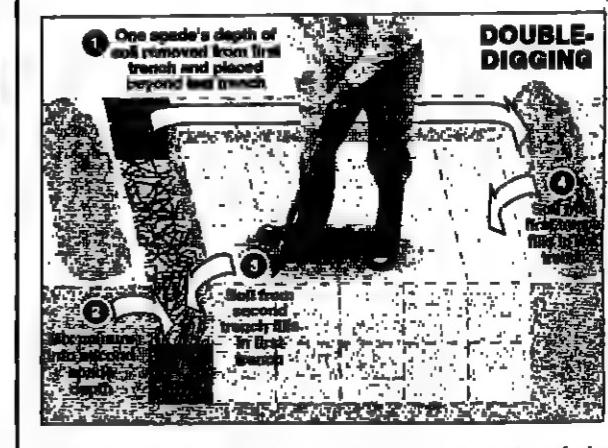
A Prune it back with a saw in March to the vertical stems attached to the wall. Feed it well. New shoots will clothe the structure over the year, and flowering should start again the next year.

Q We have a beautiful weeping ash. In spring there are snowdrops and all colours of crocuses under the branches. What could we grow in summer, and when should we feed or mulch the tree? — Mrs J. Bassil, Wimslow, Cheshire.

A Wild and salty it may be (what a recipe for retirement), but it will also be relatively mild so close to the sea. Use hebes, clearias, phormium, yucca, and cordyline. I would also make the most of succulents such as tubs full of the elephantine *Agave americana* and baskets of trailing *Lampranthus* and *Carpobrotus*. Make the most of geraniums.

Q Readers wishing to have their gardening problems answered should write to: Garden Answers, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington St, London E1 8XN. We regret that few personal answers can be given and that it may not be possible to deal with every request. Advice is offered without legal responsibility. The Times also regrets that enclosures accompanying letters cannot be returned.

Weekend tips



■ One spade's depth of soil removed from first trench and placed beyond second trench.
■ Lift gladioli when they turn yellow, cut off stems, dry the corms, rub clean, label varieties and store.
■ Stop damping down greenhouses, but keep ventilation generally in dry, sunny weather.
■ Continue potting spring bulbs for a staggered indoor display. Dry off lilies and hippeastrums in their pots.

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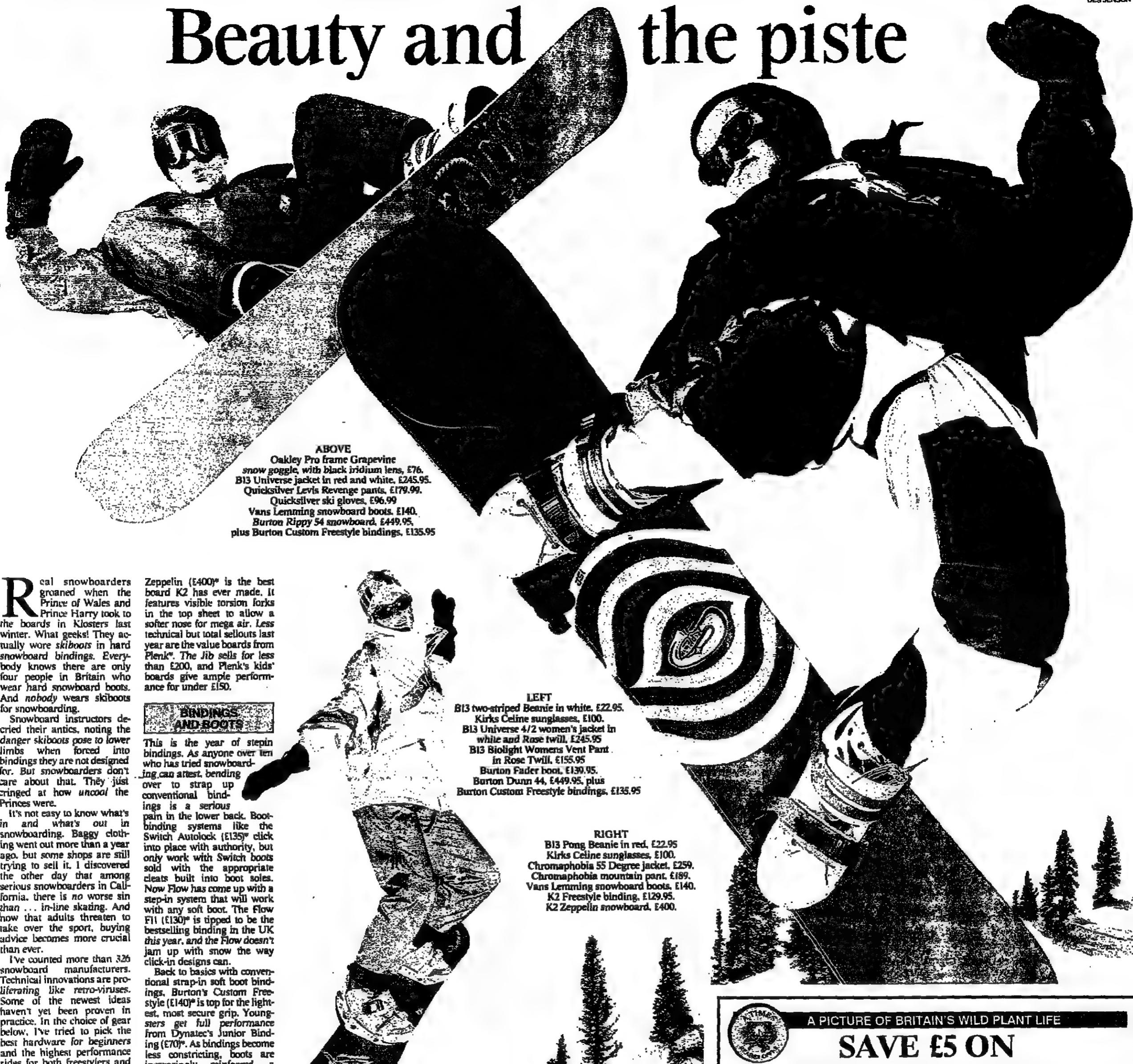
SHOPPING

7

Doug Sager explains how snowboarders can achieve the coolest looks on the slopes - even as beginners

DES JENSON

Beauty and the piste



ABOVE
Oakley Pro frame Grapevine snow goggle, with black iridium lens, £76.
B13 Universe jacket in red and white, £245.95.
Quicksilver Levi's Revenge pants, £179.99.
QuickSilver ski gloves, £96.99.
Vans Lemming snowboard boots, £140.
Burton Rippy 54 snowboard, £449.95,
plus Burton Custom Freestyle bindings, £135.95

LEFT
B13 two-striped Beanie in white, £22.95.
Kirks Celine sunglasses, £100.
B13 Universe 4/2 women's jacket in white and Rose Twill, £245.95.
B13 Biolight Womens Vent Pant in Rose Twill, £155.95.
Burton Fader boot, £139.95.
Burton Dunn 44, £449.95, plus
Burton Custom Freestyle bindings, £135.95

RIGHT
B13 Pong Beanie in red, £22.95.
Kirks Celine sunglasses, £100.
Chromophobia 55 Degree jacket, £259.
Chromophobia mountain pant, £189.
Vans Lemming snowboard boots, £140.
K2 Zeppelin binding, £129.95.
K2 Zeppelin snowboard, £400.

Real snowboarders groaned when the Prince of Wales and Prince Harry took to the boards in Klosters last winter. What geeks! They actually wore skiboots in hard snowboard bindings. Everybody knows there are only four people in Britain who wear hard snowboard boots. And nobody wears skiboots for snowboarding.

Snowboard instructors deplored their antics, noting the danger skiboots pose to lower limbs when forced into bindings they are not designed for. But snowboarders don't care about that. They just cringed at how *uncool* the Princes were.

It's not easy to know what's in and what's out in snowboarding. Baggy clothing went out more than a year ago, but some shops are still trying to sell it. I discovered the other day that among serious snowboarders in California, there is no worse sin than ... in-line skating. And now that adults threaten to take over the sport, buying advice becomes more crucial than ever.

I've counted more than 326 snowboard manufacturers. Technical innovations are proliferating like retro-viruses. Some of the newest ideas haven't yet been proven in practice. In the choice of gear below, I've tried to pick the best hardware for beginners and the highest performance rides for both freestylers and freecarvers.

Adult learners who buy from the list below can rest assured that when their kids laugh at them on slopes it won't be because of what they're riding.

BOARDS

Want to go for the long board for sticking those big drops, but don't want to lose spin characteristics with a monster heavy blade? Burton's Supermodels (£436-£466) are made of new ultra-lightweight materials for one of the best all-around rides anywhere on the mountain. If you can't get enough of the halfpipe, Burton's Customs (£430) remain some of the best freestyle boards. Among the Burton Pro Board range (£450), the Jim Rippy 54 was most in demand last season, but the Terje Balance 156 is possibly even more impressive in its "do everything" performance. Ever crashed because your feet overhang the board? K2's Fat Bob (£390) boards are made for Bigfoot. The new

Zeppelin (£400)^{*} is the best board K2 has ever made. It features visible torsion forks in the top sheet to allow a softer nose for mega air. Less technical but total sellouts last year are the value boards from Plenk*. The Jib sells for less than £200, and Plenk's kids' boards give ample performance for under £150.

BINDINGS AND BOOTS

This is the year of step-in bindings. As anyone over ten who has tried snowboarding can attest, bending over to strap up conventional bindings is a serious pain in the lower back. Boot-binding systems like the Switch Autolock (£135)^{*} click into place with authority, but only work with Switch boots sold with the appropriate cleats built into boot soles. Now Flow has come up with a step-in system that will work with any soft boot. The Flow FI1 (£130)^{*} is tipped to be the bestselling binding in the UK this year, and the Flow doesn't jam up with snow the way click-in designs can.

Back to basics with conventional strap-in soft boot bindings. Burton's Custom Freestyle (£140)^{*} is top for the lightest, most secure grip. Youngsters get full performance from Dynatec's Junior Binding (£70)^{*}. As bindings become less constricting, boots are increasingly reinforced, a good example being the Northwave Lamm (£190), which has an inner-boot like a ski-boot liner. Looks aside, Burton Freecarve (£225)^{*} gives the ultimate in reinforcement for freecarving. They say it's comfortable to walk in, but it looks like a ski boot to me. Best-looking boot on the market has to be Flow's Swell Boot (£180)^{*}. It has phenomenal heel retention, looks like a high-top basketball shoe, and is built for cliffs and carving.

Adult learners who buy from the list below can rest assured that when their kids laugh at them on slopes it won't be because of what they're riding.

CLOTHING

I like a company, which says what it means. And what I would most like to be wearing this winter is Chromophobia, in black and white. The 55 Degree Jacket (£259)^{*} and Mountain Pant (£189)^{*} are worthy of their Canadian heritage. This is tough, technical clothing with an unbelievable two-year guarantee. It's impossible to go wrong with Quicksilver — who else would have come up with Levi's Revenge (£189)^{*}, waterproof, breathable snowpants de-

signed to look like jeans.

Quicksilver's Original Sin Jacket (£259)^{*} is loaded with technical features and one of the best-looking garments.

Women will want to check out Kurvz, American gear designed by women snowboarders and the Prom line, from Swag. Swag's Ladies Luna Jacket (£109)^{*} is full featured, but very reasonable in price. Kurvz's Diana Tech Jacket (£196)^{*} is as function-specific as the name suggests, and with the Diana Tech Pant (£196)^{*}, featuring a rear bathroom zipper for quick use, really makes a go-anywhere outfit.

ACCESSORIES

Snowboarders who feel the cold should consider the Thaw

Snowboard Longjohn (£29)^{*}.

Aside from the cool colours — bulldozer, demon and gun dog — the knees are padded with extra material. Look at any snowboarder's gloves and you'll see why they call us "shredders". Columbia's basic snowboard glove (£40)^{*} has reinforced fingers and a waterproof, breathable shell, a lot of glove for the money. Burton's Universe Glove (£60)^{*} is more expensive, the palm area is reinforced.

Snowboarders do suffer from loose screws. To keep board and bindings on the same plane, carry Totem's stash boxes of Torsx countersunk and cylinderhead screws (£6 each). Don't forget the Totem Claw (£20)^{*}, a chrome vanadium retractable knife plus spanner, and the Totem Dead Head multi-function screwdriver (£18)^{*}.

It goes anywhere overland, down mountain pastures or the motorway, and it carries.

(£250).

The Fishpaw: Great idea.

On those days when the snow is heavy and wet, and spraying

into your face, use the patented Sweeper rubber wiper built into the right thumb of Fishpaw's Yamada Pro snowboarder mitt (£75)^{*} to clean your goggles without smears.

The snowboard stopper:

"Where are the brakes?" most

beginners yell the first time

they start sliding on a snowboard. The Sno-Motion

Snow Brakes fit the back of a

board and at the press of a

button lower two blades into

the snow, for a controlled

descent" (£200).

The ultimate snowboard: It had to happen, a 40mph snowboard that does jumps and runs for an hour on one litre of petrol. Invented by snowboarders from Florida, and now available in the UK, the Powerboard has to be ridden to be believed. The 4.6 horsepower two-stroke engine is controlled by a hand-held throttle, but no brakes (£1500).

WHERE TO STOCK UP FOR THE SLOPES



Burton, 01784 251 000; Chromophobia 01932 570070; Columbia, 01749 686368; Dynatec, 01782 541554; Fishpaw, 01224 868433; Flow, 0155 9731001; K2, 0161 4281178; Kurv, 01932 570070; MountainBoard 001 719 447 1271; NorthWave, 0171 366 6666; Oakley, 01462 475475; Plenk, 01932 570070; Powerboard, 0164 743 3591.

NEW AND NEEDED

The MountainBoard: Snowboarders love living on the edge. Now you can indulge G-force addiction any time anywhere. The MountainBoard looks like being the biggest thing since hula hoops. It's a snowboard shape laid out on a longitudinal axle with twin rubber spring-mounted wheels fore and aft. "Another way to kill yourself," says dad, so you know it's cool. It comes in four lengths, adapts to hard or soft bindings and can be customised with harder springs and four types of tyres.

THE GOOD HOUSE GUIDE FOR FIRST-TIME BUYERS
Page 11

A PICTURE OF BRITAIN'S WILD PLANT LIFE

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PROPERTY

11

Special deals and a buoyant market are tempting a new generation of homeowners

First-time buyers back on the scene

LOW interest rates, affordable house prices and falling unemployment are encouraging first-time buyers to get a foothold on the home-owner ladder.

With so many people stuck in the negative equity trap, many first-time buyers have waited up to six years, often staying with their parents, for signs that prices have stopped falling. But now, with evidence that the market is moving, they are house-hunting in earnest, taking advantage of special mortgage deals. These can slash monthly repayments for up to three years and provide "cashbacks" for furniture and legal fees.

The Halifax Building Society is even offering a guarantee to first-timers that protects against negative equity. If the home-owner decides to move between five and ten years after taking out the mortgage and is in negative equity, the Halifax will sell the property and fully repay the mortgage.

The new generation of first-time buyers are older — most are in their late twenties — and many have a sizeable financial cushion behind them. Most will not buy unless they are confident about job security, say building societies.

They are right to be cautious. New home owners who lose their jobs and cannot pay their mortgage get no help from the state for the first nine months. However, only one in five borrowers take out payment protection insurance offered by lenders, often because they cannot afford the extra cost, according to the Council of Mortgage Lenders.

Barry Naisbitt, an economist with the Abbey National, says: "In 1982 more than one in three home-buyers were making their first purchase before the age of 24. Today, the number of young buyers is much lower. Uncertainty about jobs has held younger people back. Now that unemployment is falling and more

jobs are being created, they are more confident about buying their first home."

Few first-timers need 100 per cent mortgages, as was the case in the housing boom of the late 1980s, when many young buyers, hit by rising interest rates, found they had borrowed more than they could afford to pay back, leading to a flood of repossessions. These days most have saved a deposit of between 5 and 15 per cent.

They can afford to be more selective, bypassing new starter-homes, hard-to-sell studios and one-bedroom flats in favour of larger properties suitable for raising a family.

According to the TSB, the cost of buying a home is at its most affordable level since 1978. Its affordability index shows that typical house-buyer in 1990 would spend £71.30 from each £100 of take-home pay for the average home loan. Now buyers spend just £25.40 on their mortgage out of every £100 he or she takes home. Estate agents believe that the shortage of well-located houses on the market in many areas is leading to increased competition and rising prices.

Hugh Dunsmore Hardy, chief executive of the National Association of Estate Agents, says: "First-time buyers are back, but their requirements have changed. They will often buy older houses in need of modernisation but are competing with those who have left the market and decided to move back in. That adds to the shortage of three-bedroom pre-1960 houses." According to the Council of Mortgage Lenders, the average price paid by first-time buyers nationwide is £45,000, which buys a new two-bedroom terraced house in Plymouth or a three-bedroom semi in Greater Manchester. In Greater London, the average is around



£65,000, which provides a two-bedroom flat or a small terraced house in cheaper suburbs, such as Catford.

With favoured parts of central London showing price rises of almost 10 per cent in the past six months, many first-time buyers are having to compromise on area and Notting Hill, South Kensington and Shepherd's Bush, neighbouring Notting Hill, Fulham, Hampstead, Primrose Hill and Belsize Park are beyond the reach of

HILARY WADE

most young buyers. Hilary Wade of London estate agents Winkworth says: "Younger buyers want to be near smart shops and restaurants. Popular areas are Hackney and Stoke Newington, bordering Islington; North Kensington and Shepherd's Bush, neighbouring Notting Hill; Clerkenwell, close to Covent Garden, Soho and Islington."

CHERYL TAYLOR

TIPS: MAKE SURE YOU...

■ Try to see your chosen location in all its different guises. A neighbourhood may seem very different at night, at weekends or during school holidays. Visit it at different times of the day or week to get a better idea of what it's like to live there.

■ Be wary of vacant land nearby. It might become the site for housing or an industrial development.

■ Look at practicalities. Most people will need to use public transport at some time. How far are you from the railway station, buses, shops, schools and health centres. Could you cope when the car is in for repair?

■ Find out if there are any potential sources of noise or air pollution nearby, such as major roads, rubbish dumps, railway lines, airports, pubs, school-playgrounds, factories, dairies, quarries or goods yards.

■ Reduce conflict with neighbours. Opt for a house with space out of sight to repair a car.

■ Find out about car parking. Parking problems can contribute to road accidents, car theft and disputes between neighbours. There may not be enough space for two-car households and visitor parking, especially in streets of terraced housing or busy main roads.

■ Consider the layout of the property. A kitchen at the front of the house means you can't keep an eye on children in the back garden while you are washing up.



Open-planning can make small homes seem spacious, but may not suit families with teenagers who want privacy. Separate living and dining rooms mean different activities can go on at the same time, but rooms can be small and dark. Integral garages and hallways sometimes produce L-shaped rooms which are difficult to furnish. If the only way out is through the living room, it could be messy to take out the rubbish.

■ Check that the property is safe. Avoid winding stairs and tapering treads. Closely spaced banisters will stop children slipping through. Windows should have locks to prevent small children falling out and burglars breaking in. Is there space in the kitchen to rest hot pans? The kitchen door should be well away from the cooker. Badly installed or poorly maintained boilers can produce poisonous gas — stained or

damaged appliances and a smell of fumes are warning signs.

■ Get your surveyor to check if the property has been rewired in the past 15 years. There should be circuit breakers at mains supply and enough electrical sockets to avoid trailing wires around.

■ Ask to see fuel bills. A well-insulated property will cost less to heat, but it must have good ventilation to prevent condensation.

Front doors leading directly into living rooms, large areas of north-facing single-glazed windows and conservatories that cannot be separated from other rooms in the winter all put up heating bills.

■ Take account of daylight. North-facing windows receive no direct sunlight. Shallow rooms are more likely to be well lit than deep narrow ones.

■ Check the garden. Steeply sloping gardens, and ponds, can be difficult to maintain and dangerous for children. Walls and fences with lockable gates prevent children and animals straying, but shade a small garden. North-facing gardens lack direct sunlight. Large trees close to the house can cause subsidence.

■ Establish whether there is a long-term management structure in place, if you are buying a house or flat on a lease. Ideally, each owner will be given a share in the management company who will ultimately own the freehold and control service charges.

WARNINGS: MAKE SURE YOU DON'T...

■ Buy a house or a flat without seeking professional advice. Take advice about the structural condition of the property you hope to buy before handing over the money. A home-buyers' report, which includes a condition survey and a valuation fee, costs between £250 and £500. If you are buying an older house a full structural survey is advisable. Engage an independent solicitor before you make an offer on a property.

■ Buy a property that will attract crime. Check that the position of porches, extensions, garages, balconies and drain pipes do not provide an easy climbing route for burg-

glars. Houses backing onto open ground, railway embankments, woods and footpaths, all make it easier for thieves to break in. Many insurers insist on window locks and extra door locks.

■ Buy a house or flat on a busy road if you have young children and there is not a secure space for them to play.

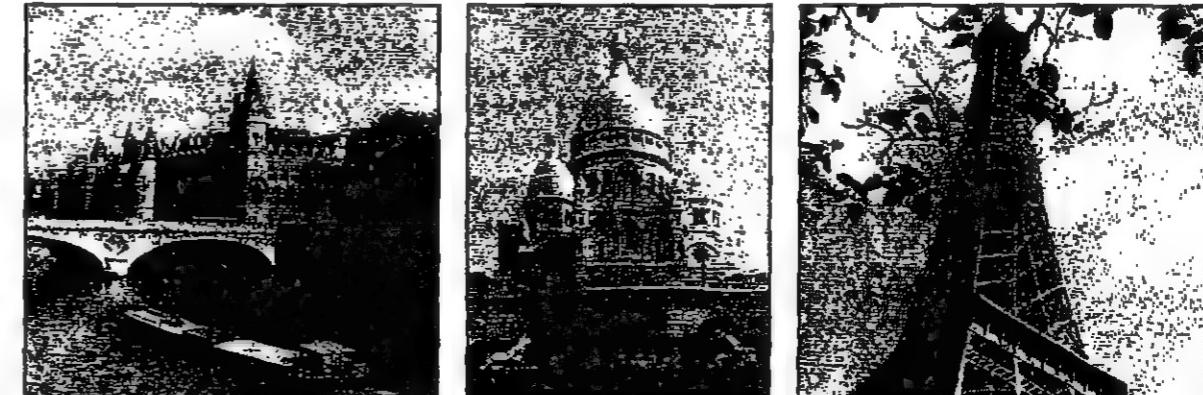
■ Buy a property in need of modernisation if you don't want to spend your leisure time doing it up, and you can't afford to pay a builder to do the work. People tend to underestimate the work and cost involved in making an old house habitable.

■ Buy a flat in an old building, if you are worried



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3* Montmartre Inn (B) 2 nights £39pp for car and 4 adults. This attractive, recently renovated hotel is located close to the Moulin Rouge and the heart of Montmartre but also within 15 minutes walk of the famous department stores such as Galeries Lafayette. All bedrooms have private shower/bath-

room, hair dryer, TV and mini-bar. One child (under 12) can stay free of charge when sharing with two full paying adults. RO = room only; BB = bed and breakfast; PP = per person.

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Big rooms make pubs great places to live, with or without customers, as increasing numbers of buyers are finding out

A free house becomes home

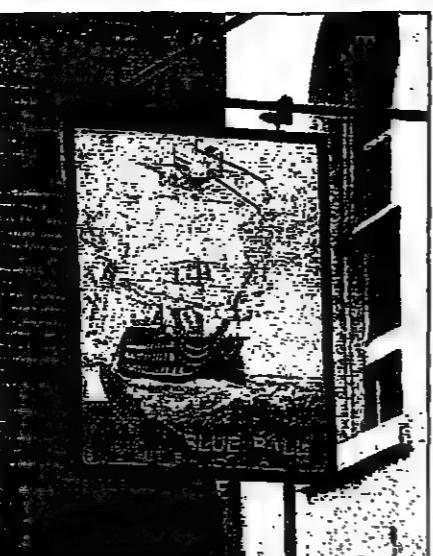
This time last year John de Noia was working for a construction company in New York. Now he is the new host at the Wheatsheaf Inn at Titchfield in Hampshire. He bought the pub a few months ago with his wife Adrienne. "We wanted to work for ourselves," says Mr de Noia whose grandmother ran a bar in Manhattan for 30 years.

The couple have two large bedrooms for their children, a smaller bedroom for themselves and a sitting room of about 10ft by 14ft. There is also a long function room which they are not yet sure what to do with. It may end up being converted into two bedrooms for bed and breakfast.

Mr de Noia says: "We looked at ten pubs but the appeal of this one was its age (about 200 years), its character and the fact that the garden was the right size and can hold six tables. We also wanted a place we could put our stamp on and we felt that this was it."

The De Noias are just two of the thousands of people who have bought into the pub trade over the years and are realistic about the work involved. For those who are not, caution is advised. "It's a hellishly hard occupation and standards are rising all the time. But the first thing to consider is what it will be like being with your partner for 24 hours a day," says Colin Wellstead, national public house director of Christie & Co which currently has about a thousand pubs all over the country on its books. Some 200 of those are disposals by the pub company Phoenix Inns.

Mr Wellstead places pubs into three price bands. Those at £50,000-£150,000 generally attract people who have never owned a pub before, he says, while those between £150,000-£300,000 tend to go to buyers who have already had experience of the licensed trade either as managers, tenants or



This pub was sold for under £90,000

owners. Most properties above £300,000 are sold to brewers and pub companies.

Adam Lansdown at the Edinburgh office of Robert Barry has seen success and disappointment amongst those who buy into the trade. He says: "People still have a dream about pubs and I think there's a fair proportion of them who make a fantastic success out of running one. Those who might struggle are the ones who buy too small in terms of turnover — less than £80,000 a year — and don't have the support of a second income. They're not quite busy enough to have staff to help them, they can be tied seven days a week and they're working as well as running the business."

A number of pubs go people for residential use (see case study) and according to David Tooley, chief reporter of the *The Licensee and Morning Advertiser*, that can be a judicious way of buying a home.

In certain areas where property prices are high it's probably cheap-

er for people to get a pub and convert it than actually buying a house. The space is a big attraction as well, but be aware that some councils may object to a change of use because they see the pub as a community asset, he says. *The Licensee and Morning Advertiser*, one of the newspapers of the licensed trade, has a property section every Monday.

James Grimes at Fleurets in London says that a lot of work may have to be done to convince the planners that a change of use from pub to residential is desirable. Nevertheless, he says there is definitely a niche market developing here.

The buyers tend to have a pretty good idea about what to do with the buildings and they will end up with a home with lots of space, including a basement, and usually plenty of character. The areas where this market is most noticeable are the up and coming parts of east London — Poplar, Clerkenwell and Hackney — where you can pick up pubs cheaper than in other areas of the capital. It's also happening in East Anglia where there seems to be an over supply of pubs, he says.

Fleurets has more than 400 pubs for sale in England and Wales ranging from £50,000 upwards. One place on the market, which Mr Grimes feels is a possible candidate for conversion, is the thatched Duke's Head in Heath and Reach near Leighton Buzzard which comes with two bars, an inglenook fireplace, three double bedrooms, bathroom, kitchen, garden and car park. The price is £40,000.

The Shergar at Peckham in south London is also on Fleurets' books. It is next to Victorian terraced houses and is priced at £128,000. The property has three bedrooms and a sitting room upstairs. Downstairs there is a bar, a games room and a kitchen. Sidney Phillips in Hereford is another company which specialises in the pub sales. Cur-



Julia Hember outside the Ship and Blue Ball pub in Shoreditch, east London, which she is converting into flats with her brothers

rently the firm has almost 1,000 pubs for sale, all over the country and most are in the £100,000-£250,000 price bracket. Eighty per cent are country pubs.

The Edinburgh office of Robert Barry has 24 pubs for sale in Scotland and the north of England including a village pub near Ayr with a 250-seater function room and six bedrooms, all with showers or bathrooms. The asking price is £200,000.

CHRISTIAN DYMOND

- Christie & Co 0171 227 0700: Fleurets 0171 426 0992.
- Sidney Phillips 01981 250333.
- Robert Barry & Co (Edinburgh office) 0131 225 2944.
- *The Licensee and Morning Advertiser* 01753 611911

JULIA HEMBER will be celebrating Christmas in her own pub. By then the builders should have finished converting the Ship and Blue Ball in Shoreditch, London, into three flats with a photographic studio in the bar and a graphic design studio in the cellar.

Pubs were at the top of her list when Miss Hember, a freelance photographer, started looking for new living and work space. With the help of her father, Paul, she went to Christie & Co, specialists in the field of pub sales. They looked at eight properties.

"For the amount of space you get they're very good value. If there's accommodation upstairs

ROOM AT THE INN

pubs are not that difficult to convert," she says. Her venture is a joint one with brothers Simon, Marcus and Miles.

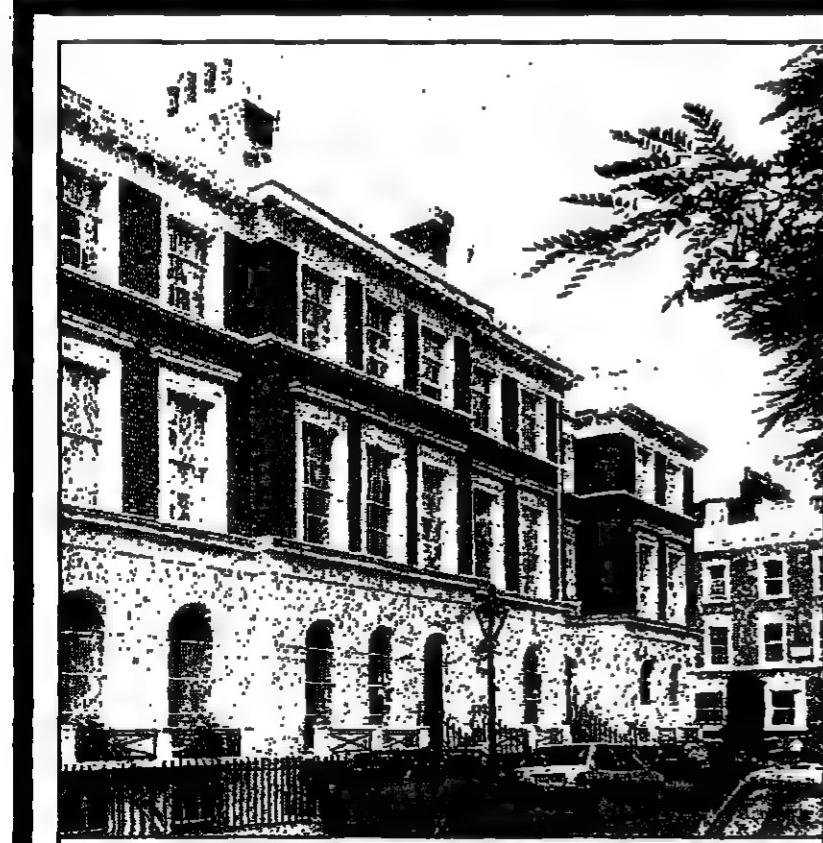
The cost was just under the asking price of £90,000 and Paul Hember thinks another £50,000 will be needed for conversion.

This for a four-storey property (plus basement) with 700sq ft of space on each floor, a stone's throw from the City and nesting within a creative community. The Hembers got planning permission for the conversion before buying. "It's a Victorian pub with arched windows and tiles on the

outside. We're keeping those but removing fittings from the bar because they're not wonderful. Then we'll cut an area out of the bar floor so you can see into the basement," says Miss Hember.

The old bar has a 13ft high ceiling and plenty of light. Access to the basement will be by a Victorian cast iron spiral staircase bought from an architectural reclamation firm.

The three flats will each have two bedrooms, a sitting room, kitchen and bathroom. They will be reached by a different entrance from the studios. Two of the flats will be rented out. "I think this is a pretty good investment," Miss Hember says.



ST JAMES'S GARDENS, W12 Freehold £385,000
A charming Victorian house overlooking the communal square gardens. 5 beds, 2 baths, 2 receptions, kit/family rm, utility rm, 2 cloaks, west facing terrace, 15.4m (50ft) garden.

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BERKSHIRE Near Newbury

An imposing wing of a Victorian country house recently renovated and set in mature grounds of just over 0.5ha (0.15 acre). 5 beds, 2 baths, 4 receptions, 2 garages, further land of 0.2 ha available separately.

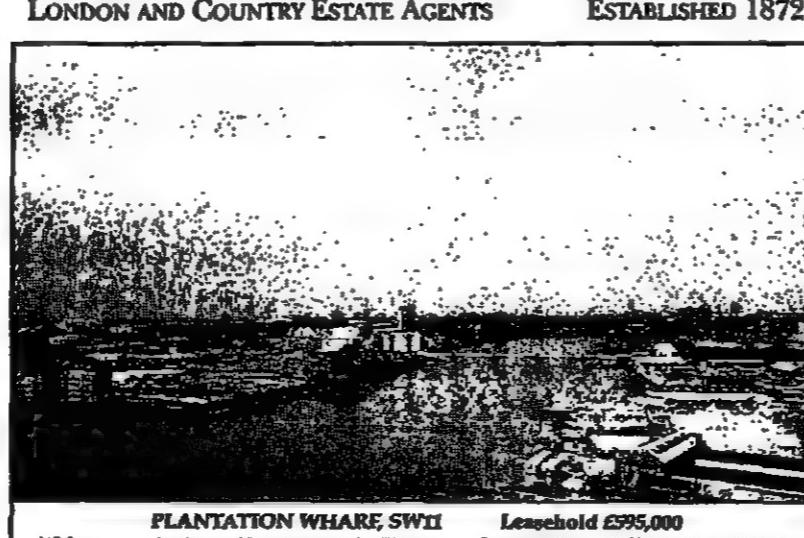
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Price Guide: £250,000

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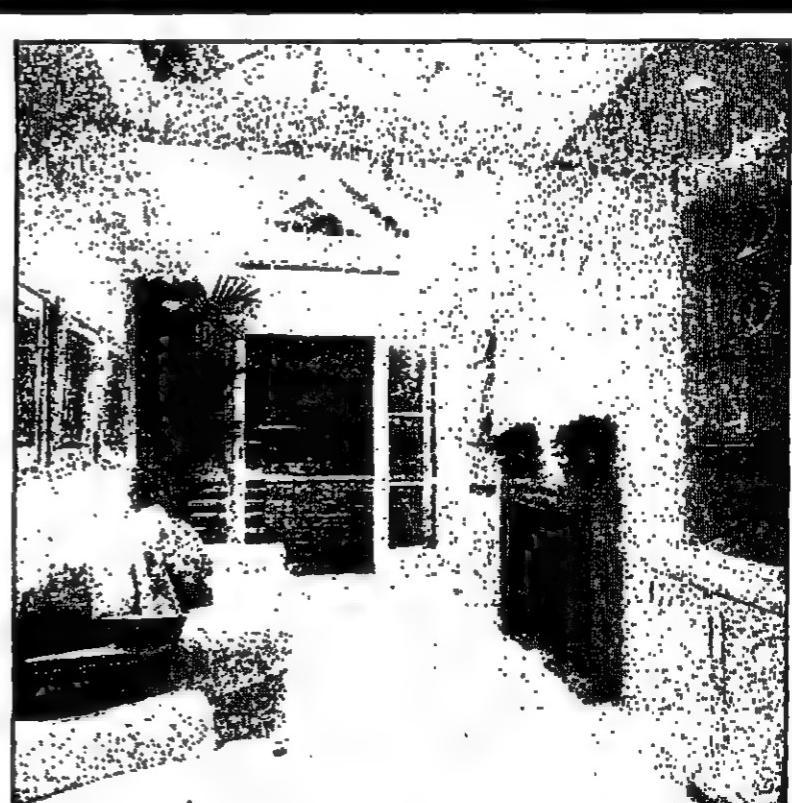
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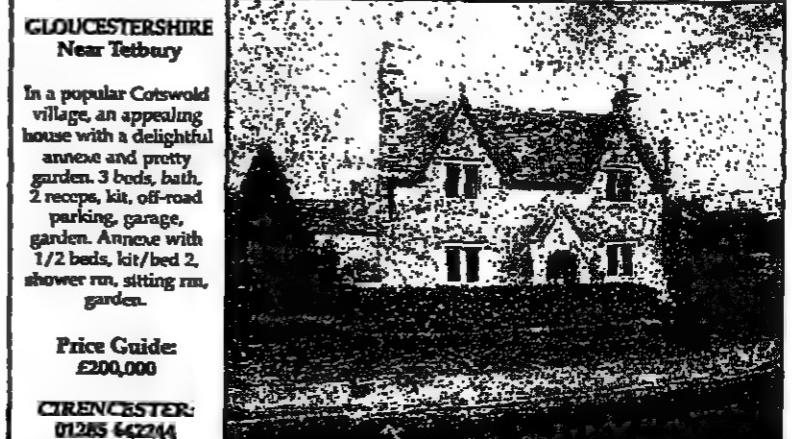
OXFORDSHIRE
Asthall Leigh, Near Witney
With 1.72 ha (4.5 acres) of gardens, paddocks & stables, a chalet-style detached bungalow in a popular Cotswold village. 4/5 bedroom suites, 2 receptions, kitchen, utility, ground floor annexe of bed 5/sitting rm with bath.
Price Guide: £295,000
OXFORD: 01865 311522



CRANLEY GARDENS, SW7 Lease to 2055 £695,000

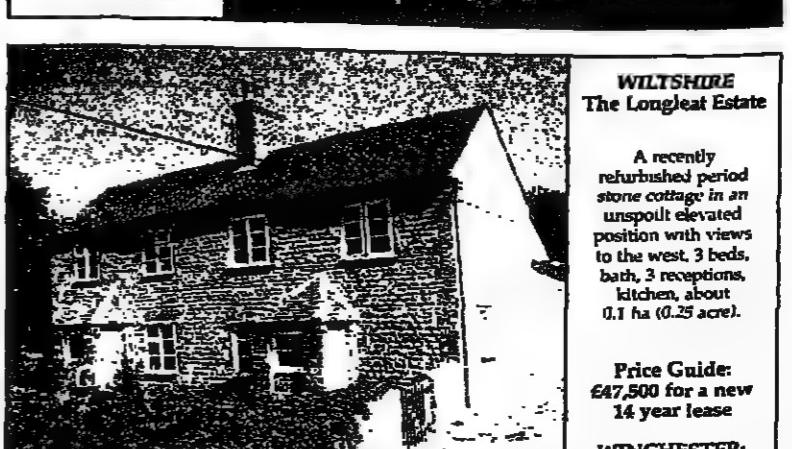
An outstanding garden maisonette renovated to a high standard, at the rear of a period building. 3 beds, 2 baths, shower, clk, 2 receptions, conserv., kit, caretaker, private gdn, common gdn.

RUSSELL SIMPSON: 0171-225 0277 JOHN D WOOD & CO: 0171-352 1484



GLOUCESTERSHIRE
Near Tetbury
In a popular Cotswold village, an appealing house with a delightful annexe and pretty garden. 3 beds, bath, 2 receptions, kit, off-road parking, garage, garden. Annex with 1/2 beds, kit/bed 2, shower, clk, sitting rm, garden.

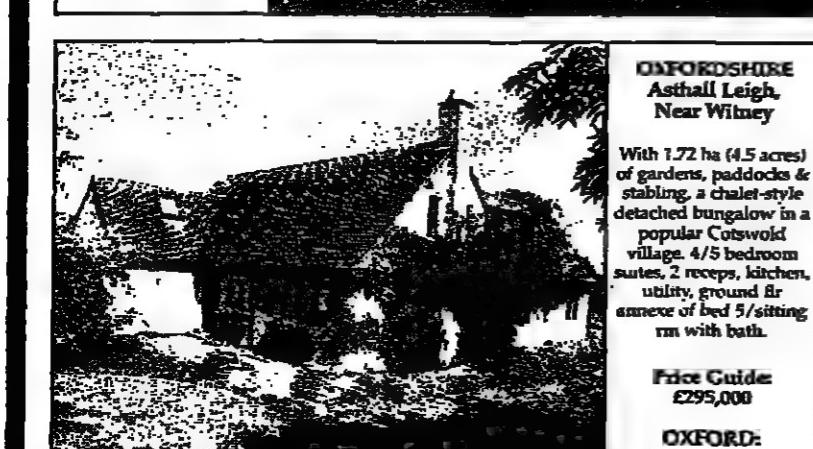
Price Guide: £200,000
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WILTSHIRE
The Longleaf Estate

A recently refurbished period stone cottage in an unspoilt elevated position with views to the west. 3 beds, bath, 3 receptions, kitchen, about 0.1 ha (0.25 acre).

Price Guide: £47,500 for a new 14 year lease
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SOUTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE - Passebrook
Furnished £1,800 p.c.m.
Central Milton Keynes 5 miles Buckingham 7 miles. With rural views, a delightful attached 17th century stone mill house of historic interest, on the River Great Ouse. 6 beds, 4 baths, 3 receptions, kitchen, utility, long river frontage with fishing rights. About 1.2 ha (3 acres).
OXFORD LETTINGS: 01865 311522

PETS

13

A Vet Writes

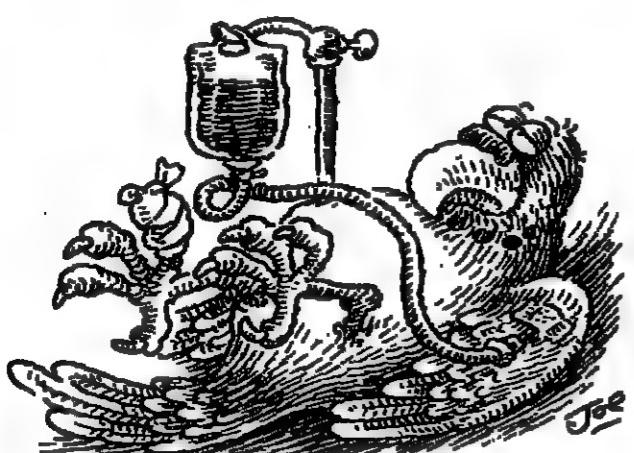
Cuts that can kill

A little blood goes a long way. Like milk. Drop a bottleful and it looks as if a cow has burst. The red stuff's worse and spreads further. Ten to 12 per cent of body weight — animals or humans — is blood. A healthy, 12-stone man can spare a pint, or even two, for the Blood Transfusion Service without ill-effects. He has about 15 pints altogether.

A medium-sized dog — 30lb — has nearly three pints of blood and a 10z canary less than a teaspoonful. When Fido cuts his pad, a few ounces of blood can make a terrible mess on the rug but there's no danger of bleeding to death. But if a canary breaks a nail and sheds 50 drops of blood, that's life-threatening.

Whenever blood is shed it's useful to know how much. Enough to be critical — or not. Every vet has met a lively and cheerful, bloodstained white miniature poodle with a cut pad and an insistence that he's lost at least two pints of blood. Convincing the distressed owner that only an ounce of blood has been shed and losing even one pint would result in the dog bleeding to death can take longer than bandaging the invalid's foot. And over-assessment of blood loss is not confined to doting pet keepers. I was once called by the police to a dog "with his throat cut". On arrival, a

JAMES ALLCOCK



The art of getting a streetwise city dog to adapt to the new pleasures of the countryside



Beau the labrador and Saffie the Jack Russell love rolling in silage and badger droppings. Yet the countryside is full of traps for dogs and vigilance is the only solution

The hazardous call of the wild

Beauregard, our labrador, was never very keen on London. Large dogs do not fit neatly into the urban environment, even in the largest cities, and when we swapped him twice a day romp in the dog pound of South Park for the wide open spaces of Wiltshire, Beau and his chum Saffie, our Jack Russell bitch, found themselves in Hound Heaven — at least for a while. Then we discovered that the country, like the town, sets certain rules for dogs.

The first thing to realise is that, with the possible exception of working dogs such as sheep dogs, gun dogs and foxhounds, dogs are not really welcome in the countryside. They can upset sheep and scare nesting game birds, trample crops and attract the unwelcome attention of canine. This last can be alarming if you are out with your dog and find yourself on the receiving end of a stamped. Beau does, is usually hot on his tail in the run up to a silage pit. Unfortunately, silage that Beau can wade through submerges Saffie completely, and she has to be hauled out and marched to the nearest tap for a good hosing down, or carried home at arms length and scrubbed clean in the sink.

Saffie is currently being scrubbed clean two or three times a week, and she does not like it at all. The wild is powerful, even for well-trained pets.

We have got used to second guessing Beau and Saffie, but every walk is still an exercise in assessing the potential problems that lie along the way. Beauregard, in spite of regular rebuffs, remains convinced that the whole world is his friend and still races off to investigate new sights and smells — especially smells — and returns in his own good time, sometimes pursued by an outraged landowner.

Walks along the Kennet and Avon Canal, chosen for excursions as a farmer-free zone, have had to be curtailed after several fishermen lost all their gentle wriggling worms, which provided Beau with a

tasty snack, or were almost bounced into the canal by his high-speed arrival. Fishermen are not noted for their sense of humour and we will not be back along the canal until the fishing season is over. Beau is, I admit, remarkably bouncy.

Apart from the risk of upsetting the locals, the countryside is not without its dangers. Many farms and farmyards are a tangle of rusting wire and derelict machinery, where poison left for vermin is equally dangerous for dogs, but one of the main hazards are swamps of rotting straw or silage pits. Beau adores slurry pits. One sniff of rotting silage and he plunges in at high speed, scattering silage in all directions, before enjoying a satisfying roll.

This is bad enough for a large labrador but is downright hazardous for a small Jack Russell. Saffie who, like all Jack Russells, tends to be feisty and has to do anything Beau does, is usually hot on his tail in the run up to a silage pit. Unfortunately, silage that Beau can wade through submerges Saffie completely, and she has to be hauled out and marched to the nearest tap for a good hosing down, or carried home at arms length and scrubbed clean in the sink.

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below, but many burrows lurk out of sight in hedgerows so, constant vigilance or getting them on lead when rabbits are about.

Traps are another danger to the questing hound. Only last night running about on the edge of a cornfield, Saffie ran her head into a wire snare. Fortunately, she did not struggle and sat there until Beauregard found her and brought us up to let her loose, but the dangers of strangling in snares is yet another risk dogs run in the countryside.

Anyone who imagines the country life as one of endless tranquillity has never moved

there with dogs. For peace of mind we have evolved our own Country Code for Dogs and the rules, though simple, are well worth following.

● The dog must be under control at all times, and never out of sight.

● Keep the dog on a lead when near sheep, cattle or horse riders.

● Stay out of farmyards and keep the dogs out of farm buildings.

● Buy a 1:25,000 scale map — one that shows field boundaries — and stick to marked tracks. If a path runs through a field full of sheep, choose another one.

● Train the dog to respond at once to a call or a whistle.

● Introduce the dog to neighbours and other local people; if it wanders off they will bring it home again.

Keeping to these few simple rules should ensure a trouble-free time in the country. Most of the time country living is a joy. In spite of the hazards, our dogs are much fitter gambolling along the hedgerows than they were cooped up in South Park. They are much happier in the country and if we can get them to follow the rules we will be happy too.

ROBIN NEILANDS

PET NEWS

Charity says lend me your ears

IT'S A never-ending search finding suitable dogs for training as Hearing Dogs for the Deaf and the charity has asked Pet News to help. Heather Chute, fundraiser, says: "Hearing dogs are not specially bred but selected from rescue organisations or given by breeders and pet owners. All kinds of dog (up to three years old) are suitable for assessment except working colters and large guard-dog breeds. Most are small or medium-size mongrels." If you can help contact Hearing Dogs for the Deaf, London Road, Lewknor, Oxfordshire OX9 5RY (01844 353898).

Cat lovers' hairy problem

BECOMING the owner of a Persian cat is not something to rush into. A new book on the breed warns: "Persians can be quite demanding. If you are not prepared to spend a good deal of time grooming, then a Persian is not the pet for you, nor are they ideal for people intolerant of cat hairs." A section on bathing recommends getting your Persian used to having a bath as a kitten and advises that, with adult cats, two people should tackle the task while talking gently to the reluctant bather. *Persian Cats*, by Marianne Mays, is published by Kingdom Books at £10.95 (01705 268122).

The softly softly approach

IS YOUR per frightened of loud noises? A £15 therapy tape has thunder, gunfire and even noisy lawn mowers on it. The idea is to start playing it softly at first, fussing your pet at the same time. Over a period, increase the sound gradually. The tape is available from The Company of Animals, PO Box 23, Chertsey, Surrey (01932 566900).

Fur goodness sake . . .

WE CHALLENGED readers to produce a better pet joke than the ones in *The Awfully Good Cat Joke Book* and had to suffer a postbag which included this offering from DJ. Curtis of Woolsthorpe by Belvoir, Grantham, Lincolnshire: "Did you hear that the cat food factory has gone bust?" "Yes, they've called in the retrievers." *The Awfully Good Cat Joke Book*, by David Jacobs & Trevor Dunton, is published by Metro Publishing at £4.99 (0171-734 6766).

JACK CROSSLEY

Feather Report



Dunlins are sometimes called "the plover's page".

times called "the plover's page", because they have a habit of standing behind a golden plover when the two are feeding together. The plovers, who are nervous, probably serve as useful watchmen for the dunlins. In fact it is the large plovers who are the

"servants". The dunlins, like many other waders, are seen at their most dramatic when they take flight. They go up in a tight-knit flock, and wheel and bank and swoop with incredible speed above the water. As their undersides all turn towards the ground, they flash silver; as the birds turn again, their dark backs can blend with dark clouds over the sea.

They like to roost on mudbanks and islets — and as they prepare to dive down and settle on them, their gyrations in the sky in the setting sun are the most spectacular of all.

DERWENT MAY

• What's about crested lark at Felstone, Suffolk; arctic warbler at Bishopstone Glen, Kent; buff-bellied pipit on St Agnes, Isles of Scilly. • Twitters — listen after dark for migrant arrivals. Details from Birdline, 0891 700222. Calls cost 40p a minute cheap, 50p at all other times.

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DOGS



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THE CATS PROTECTION LEAGUE

Through a test-tube, darkly

Gill Hornby hears the case in fiction against the modern miracle of in-vitro fertilisation

I HAD a certain image of Jane Asher, actress, master-baker, perfect wife and mother-squeaky-clean, wholesome, elegant and poised. And I had similar expectations of an Asher novel: squeaky-clean, wholesome, etc — and surely, it would have an Aga or two. So it is a little surprising to open *The Longing* and find the first scene is a description of male masturbation. Is she another A. A. Gill? Are necrophilia and bestiality about to follow?

Well, no. This masturbation is actually as respectable and middle-class as masturbation can be. Michael — the masturbator — is in a fertility clinic in Harley Street, trying to come up with a specimen in a test-tube while Juliet, his wife, is having her eggs removed upstairs. After years of childlessness, the Evanses are starting in-vitro fertilisation treatment.

IVF has brought hope, and, indeed, children, to thousands of unlucky couples. It is a modern miracle. But Asher is not looking on the bright side. Her novel is a powerful evocation not only of the pressures of infertility on an outwardly

■ THE LONGING
By Jane Asher
HarperCollins, £14.99
ISBN 0 00 225019 5



Asher: moral concerns

perfect couple, but also the pressures of fertility treatment on the psyche. The most important passage in the book is the description of the doctor introducing Michael's sperm to Juliet's egg: "All he had to do was to choose and join up the components in a glorious pick'n'mix and then stand back and watch the miracle of creation take place." And that

confusion between the role of man and that of deity has a disastrous impact.

Juliet gradually loses her faith in everything — husband, marriage, future — and replaces it with a demented and hysterical attachment to the doctor who is treating her. It begins with her enjoying her internal examinations. Soon, she is round at his home throwing out his girlfriend. And then, with the final descent into madness, she steals another woman's baby from a pram and disappears.

IVF is now a subject of such importance to so many that it is time it made its way into fiction. This thought-provoking, polished and professional first novel is definitely a presentation of the case against.

The ignorant objections of Juliet's mother are obviously meant to be comic ("Test-tube — there certainly wasn't anything like that in my day"); Jane Asher's real concern is for the moral haziness that surrounds the issue. And from one couple's hopeful trip to a smart clinic, she spins a modern tale of gothic horror.

From the origins of signs to the Army recruitment office

RICHLY presented, *The Illustrated Book of Signs & Symbols* by Miranda Bruce Mitford (Dorling Kindersley, £14.99 ISBN 0 753 54267) is irresistible to anyone interested in mysterious and meaningful symbols. Listing thousands of historical and cultural signs, this fascinating book records their origins in art, religion, literature and psychology with helpful cross-referencing. Here, the single rose is identified not so much as the emblem of passionate love or the Labour party, but a sign that all confidences are to be held secret, hence the central ceiling rose of Victorian architecture.

Stark social realism has been the trademark of Theresa Breslin's previous novels. *Death Or Glory Boys* (Methuen £11.99, ISBN 0 416 19346 3) tackles issues of war and peace while reading like a thriller. Out shopping with giggling friends when a terrorist blows up a nearby shop, Sarah attends an Army careers lecture and, much to the horror of pacifist friend, Phil, joins the Officer Cadet Corps. With Cal, the terrorist planning more bombings and the cadets placed on standby, one marvels at Sarah's capacity to quote First World War poets while debating the modern army's peacekeeping role and delivering skipable recruitment-style lectures. "Glow" by

Clash of symbols, a bang on the drum



King-Smith: wildlife battle

unsentimentalised wildlife story. The shooting of a doe rabbit, whose "warm innards ... wriggled and slid uneasily" into the brambles, sets the scene in hard focus as the brutal forces of rural conservation, represented by a rogue gamekeeper, are set against the articulated counsels of a huge, alert and mysterious bird who leads the beleaguered wildlife in a deadly battle for survival. Like Jack London's *Call of the Wild*, *Godhanger*, with its classical wood engravings by Andrew Davidson, has the genuine stamp of animal biography.

The icy aura of bizarre and threatening peril that hung about the works of Mervyn Peake has never quite been equalled. Based on *Titus Groan* from the *Gormenghast* trilogy, his story *Boy in Darkness* (Hodder £9.99, ISBN 0 340 68323 6), opens with Titus at 14, "in need of hateful things" and escaping his primordial home for "one tremendous day of insurrection".

What he encounters — a subterranean level ruled over by the blind and deceptively gentle Lamb who ritually "re-adjusts" humans into half-beasts — will give this generation of horror fans a glimpse of what they could be missing. It is called eloquence, and Peake, who died in 1963, had it.

MAUREEN OWEN

the way is cadet slang for "good-looking or what?"

For generations of young children, Dick King-Smith's well informed affinity with animals and nature has been a boon. In *Godhanger* (Double-day £9.99, ISBN 0 385 407785), he writes for older readers, allowing scope for a relatively

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Last Orders by Graham Swift (Picador) £16.99 £13.99

Reading in the Dark by Seamus Deane (Cape) £16.99 £11.99

The Orchard on Fire by Shona Mackay (Heinemann) £16.99 £10.99

Offer only available until Oct 29 when the Booker Prize winner will be announced.

The Times Bestseller List

HARDBACKS

	No weeks	Last week	Weekly sales
1 LONGITUDE Dava Sobel (<i>Fourth Estate</i> , £12)	6	3	2,538
2 EVENING CLASS Maeve Binchy (<i>Oriental</i> , £16.99)	1	1	2,029
3 DEATH IS NOW MY NEIGHBOUR Colin Dexter (<i>Macmillan</i> , £16.99)	0	0	1,468
4 TO THE HILT Dick Francis (<i>Michael Joseph</i> , £15.99)	3	2	1,149
5 DALGLISH: MY AUTOBIOGRAPHY Kenny Dalglish (<i>Hodder</i> , £16.99)	1	20	802
6 THE NIGEL LAWSON DIET BOOK Nigel Lawson (<i>Michael Joseph</i> , £12.99)	0	0	802
7 MY NAME ESCAPES Me Ales Guiness (<i>Harmish Hamilton</i> , £16)	1	13	746
8 GREAT GRAMMAR BOOK Jennie Maizels (<i>Riverside</i> , £12.99)	2	18	631
9 LETTERLAND ABC Richard Carlisle (<i>Nelson</i> , £8.99)	0	0	602
10 ICON Frederick Forsyth (<i>Bantam</i> , £16.99)	3	4	599
11 THE STORY OF BRITAIN Roy Strong (<i>Hutchinson</i> , £35)	1	10	568
12 THE BRANDIED MAN Catherine Cookson (<i>Bantam</i> , £16.99)	3	11	513
13 DESPERATION Stephen King (<i>Hodder</i> , £16.99)	4	7	510
14 POPCORN Ben Elton (<i>Simon & Schuster</i> , £12.99)	10	14	503
15 FRIENDSHIP BOOK: 1997 Francis Gay (D. C. Thomson, £4.25)	0	0	463
16 GUINNESS BOOK OF RECORDS: 1997 (Guinness, £15.99)	0	0	462
17 ANTONIO CARLUCCIO'S ITALIAN FEAST Antonio Carluccio (<i>BBC</i> , £16.99)	1	6	455
18 INTEGRATED BUSINESS (Heinemann Education, £9.99)	0	0	452
19 THE MAN WHO LISTENS TO HORSES Monty Roberts (<i>Hutchinson</i> , £16.99)	0	0	421
20 THE BEANO BOOK: 1997 (D. C. Thomson, £4.99)	6	19	419

PAPERBACKS

1 NOTES FROM A SMALL ISLAND Bill Bryson (<i>Black Swan</i> , £6.99)	9	1	2,664
2 CASTING OFF Elizabeth Jane Howard (<i>Piatkus</i> , £6.99)	26	6	2,653
3 THE OBSESSION Catherine Cookson (<i>Corgi</i> , £5.99)	3	5	1,804
4 WHIT Lain Banks (<i>Aurum</i> , £6.99)	2	2	1,584
5 THE FRENCH EXPERIENCE Marie-Thérèse Bougard (<i>BBC</i> , £10.99)	1	3	1,525
6 WINTER KING Bernard Cornwell (<i>Penguin</i> , £5.99)	1	1	1,461
7 FACON DE PARLER: PART 1 Angela Arnes (<i>Headline</i> , £8.99)	1	16	1,440
8 THE HORSE WHISPERER Nicholas Evans (<i>Corgi</i> , £5.99)	18	4	1,423
9 MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOUR Larose J. Medina (<i>Pitman</i> , £22.99)	0	0	1,201
10 ESPANA VIVA Derek Udy (<i>BBC</i> , £8.99)	1	11	1,196
11 DEUTSCH PLUS Reinhard Tenberg (<i>BBC</i> , £12.99)	1	14	1,095
12 THE HIGHWAY CODE Dept. of Transport (<i>HMSO</i> , £0.99)	11	10	1,070
13 BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE MUSEUM Kate Atkinson (<i>Black Swan</i> , £6.99)	38	0	1,011
14 HIGH FIDELITY Nick Hornby (<i>Indigo</i> , £5.99)	26	6	1,006
15 GREEN MILE & COFFEY ON THE MILE Stephen King (<i>Penguin</i> , £1.99)	4	8	1,004
16 HOPE Len Deighton (<i>HarperCollins</i> , £5.99)	2	19	973
17 PASOS 1: A FIRST COURSE IN SPANISH Ross Maria Martin (<i>Hodder</i> , £10.99)	0	0	958
18 BEGINNING PSYCHOLOGY Malcolm Hardy (OUP, £8.99)	0	0	928
19 SOPHIES WORLD Jostein Gaarder (<i>Phoenix</i> , £5.99)	30	0	887
20 CAPTAIN CORELLI'S MANDOLIN Louis de Bernières (<i>Minerva</i> , £6.99)	0	0	881

This Times list monitored 41,845 titles representing high-street sales of £5.7 million during the week.

SUPPLIED BY WHITAKER BOOKTRACK (01420 546420)

Blocks off the old chip

THE night before I started reading *Children, Panorama* showed a heartbreaking exposé of one couple's hopeless efforts to shake off the shadows of their own childhood and learn to be better parents to their already doomed four-year-old son, Peter. No one who saw could be in any doubt that parenting is, all too literally, a hit-and-miss affair.

So it was with a sense

almost of déjà vu that I turned

first to David Mamet's tiny

story, *Soul Murder*, which

genuinely explores the anxieties

of a loving mother who must

come to terms with her backward daughter's marriage to an equally slow-witted man.

And in *Arithmetical Town*, Todd

McEwen climbs convincingly

inside the skin of a boy

struggling with his maths

homework: I started to get

real mad and I also had to go

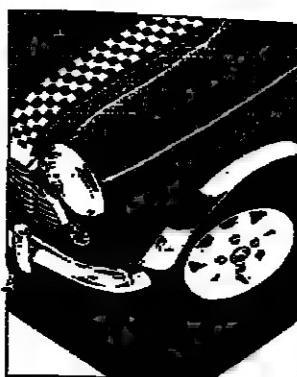
to the bathroom, but, if I

opened the door, Dad would

be on me like a German shepherd. Are you finished?

... Say, he'd think, let's just go

into the kid's room and see if



How the
sports
gear slows
down a
new Mini

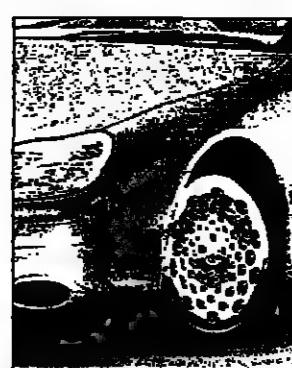
Page 2



CAR 96

Cars you
won't see
at Britain's
motor
show

Page 3



SATURDAY OCTOBER 5 1996

JAGUAR'S XK8 ■ A CAR TO MATCH THE E-TYPE LEGEND: PAGE 5

TONY WHITE



The XK8 breaks the lap record at Pirelli's wet-weather track. Prototypes have endured a million miles of testing through Arctic wastes, over deserts and around thousands of high-speed laps at the Motor Industry Research Association

It beats Porsches — so very comfortably

The man in the Porsche was not happy, Kevin Eason writes. His foot was flat on the floor of the 911 Turbo, the tail swinging as he roared through the left-hander, leaving a massive spray of water.

But he couldn't go faster than Mike Cross, Jaguar's top chassis engineer had broken the lap record at Pirelli's wet-weather test track, and the man from Porsche was having a strop. He was driving one of the world's most acclaimed sports cars and Cross was in a sleek cruiser not supposed to charge round racetracks.

But the man from Porsche had underestimated the new Big Cat. It might have wood and leather and a stereo system capable of filling the Albert Hall, it might be long and elegant — but it could outmanoeuvre every other car tested at the Vizzola track in Northern Italy.

It took a million miles of testing to create Jaguar's XK8, pounding through Arctic wastes, over desert roads in baking temperatures and through thousands of circuits around the top-secret high-speed bowl at the Motor Industry Research Association's centre at Nuneaton in Warwickshire.

I was the first British journalist to see the XK8, then in the last stages of testing as Cross threw the coupe around Vizzola, hunting through fountains of water on a surface like polished glass.

First impression was that XK8 was as long as the XJS it replaces, and the XJS was as nimble as a canal boat. How could Cross get up speed, never mind cope with a track covered in surface water, to test the stickability of the new Pirelli P6000 tyres to the limit? The XK8 seemed like an unlikely candidate for a lap record: it is a big, heavy rear-wheel-drive car which will be used mainly for touring grand style.

Mike Cross is an understated type of guy, a quietly spoken west-Midlander who looks so relaxed, he could be motoring's Perry Como. Behind the wheel though, he is a class act, a driver so good that he is highly rated by Jackie Stewart, his sensitivity for a car so sharp that he has the last word.

When you drive a Jag, you are driving a car tuned by Mike Cross.

For the XK8, the job was as tricky as it gets, balancing the ride to combine handling with comfort. "People who buy a Jaguar don't want their fillings shaking loose because the set-up is so hard for sporty driving, as you would find in an out-and-out sports car," he says. "But we have such a good power-train in the car, we wanted XK8 to have a sporty feel. Judging that combination has taken a lot of thought and time."

And Cross has got it just right, for after claiming the record at Vizzola, he threw me the keys to a

convertible and we drove in convoy from Northern Italy, across Switzerland and Germany. The contrast between being thrown by G-forces across the car at Vizzola and the seven-hour cruise was stark: on the circuit, the car roared and twisted; on the road, it was quiet, placid, almost soothing, eating mile after high-speed mile. As we hit the Autobahn, Cross's coupe suddenly surged away and I followed, the speedo needle winding round past 100mph, then 120mph. The car never wavered, the only intrusion the roar of the big Pirellis on the tarmac.

But the best was yet to come: our destination was the Nurburgring, the legendary 14-mile grand circuit, pensioned off because of the terrible attrition rate among drivers. Peter Collins died there, and Niki Lauda was horrifically burned when he crashed on one of the dozens of corners that seem to leap at unwary drivers.

Bizarrely, the track is open to the public who, for a fiver, can whiz around it in the family hatchback. But they have to be careful to dodge test teams from carmakers who regularly use the circuit to press cars to the limit on a variety of bends and surfaces difficult to find elsewhere. And Cross was going to let me drive: 14 miles, flat out on a strange circuit famous for crashes in a pre-production version of a £50,000 car.

If they were disappointed the driver was only me, they didn't show it. They must have been delighted enough to catch a glimpse of a car which is about to add to the legend of Jaguar.

First time around though, the Jag felt perfectly comfortable. The engine pulled so hard that I could shift through second and third gears manually to power ferociously through bends. With traction control on, the car could not be wrong-footed and even with it switched off, handling was completely predictable so that even I felt brave enough to drive full-throttle without fear of adding myself to the Nurburgring casualty list.



Cruiser that is at home on the racetrack

HOW THE CAT REJOINED THE CREAM

Jaguar is the most efficient car company in Ford's worldwide empire, according to executives who have turned the business around within seven years.

The accolade was hard won, with the workforce halved and wholesale changes to assembly lines as Ford executives battled to reduce costs, improve efficiency and eradicate the faults that had dented Jaguar's reputation around the world.

Nick Scheele, Jaguar's chairman, says: "We are now producing quality better than almost anybody else in the world and the customers are noticing that more and more."

Ford bought Jaguar in 1989 for £1.6 billion, when the company seemed to be brimming with confidence. However, the success hid problems of overstaffing and inefficiency at its factories in Birmingham and Coventry where working practices were years out of date. When Ford appointed manufacturing expert Bill

Hayden to run Jaguar, he could barely believe what he saw: Jaguar was the worst car factory he had seen outside of Russia, he said.

There have been leaps and bounds since making the XK8 the best-built car ever to come from Jaguar. Evidence comes from Jaguar's main market, America, where the regular surveys from J.D. Power and Associates are regarded as the ultimate guide to the best cars on the market. Jaguar is outstripping Mercedes and BMW: now its tar-

leader, the Toyota Lexus.

"We are not far behind," says Scheele. "Jaguar has had the will to transform the business and the rewards are following."

The rewards include Ford's decision to let Jaguar build a new smaller car — a reincarnation of the old, much-loved Mark II models. It will be launched in three years, built in Birmingham.

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TIME

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Going for a spin? Join the trend by taking your car forwards and steering a course down the middle of the road

Another Tony swerves right

DRIVEN TO DISTRACTION

Peter Barnard

The party conference season and the likes of Mr Neil Hamilton have conspired to take up altogether too much space in the media, blocking out reports of party conferences that really matter. So *Driven to Distraction* sent its own reporters to the annual conference of the Democratic Auto Users Party (Daup), which was held this year in the glittering surroundings of the Chicane Winter Gardens, Silverstone.

Huge change has come about in Daup since the election of a dynamic new leader, Tony Walnut-Dash, two years ago. Walnut-Dash and his lovely wife, Cherry Upholstery, have dragged Daup into the late 20th century. Gone are the old, damaging commitments, such as the promotion of car coats and subsidies for the starting-handle industry. Protectionist jingoism has been routed, to the point where any member driving a British-made car can expect automatic expulsion.

Tony and Cherry (as we have learned to call them) arrived at Silverstone in a BMW convertible, to



be greeted by Daup's life president, Mr Murray Walker, who led the adoring throng in a chorus of *'We'll keep the chequered flag flying here'* as he escorted Tony to the podium. "Fellow motorists" Tony began. "Let me not pretend for a moment that I am from Old Daup. My background, nay, my whole instinct, is New Daup, I know that many of you here today were educated in the public sector, you were taught to drive by former bus drivers and ex-

sergeants in the transport corps, whereas I went to a private school. "And what did I learn at BSM? I learned to steer a straight course, I learned to indicate before turning, I learned to consider other road users. In short, I learned what you learned, albeit without having to practise on a disused airfield. We are, you and me, as one in that we have arrived at the same destination by different routes. And now that we are here, you have asked me: where are we going?"

"I will be the stakeholder's car. Every individual working on it, every individual driving it, will be able to feel part of a single move- ment to have a shared destiny. A car with French bodywork, German engines, Italian interior design, Spanish bumpers, Greek hubcaps and, yes, a logo created in Soho.

Walnut-Dash had earlier won ringing endorsement for his policy when National Steering Committee elections routed the left and returned candidates with favour driving on the right, although sceptics doubt whether such a switch can be "phased in" as Daup is promising.

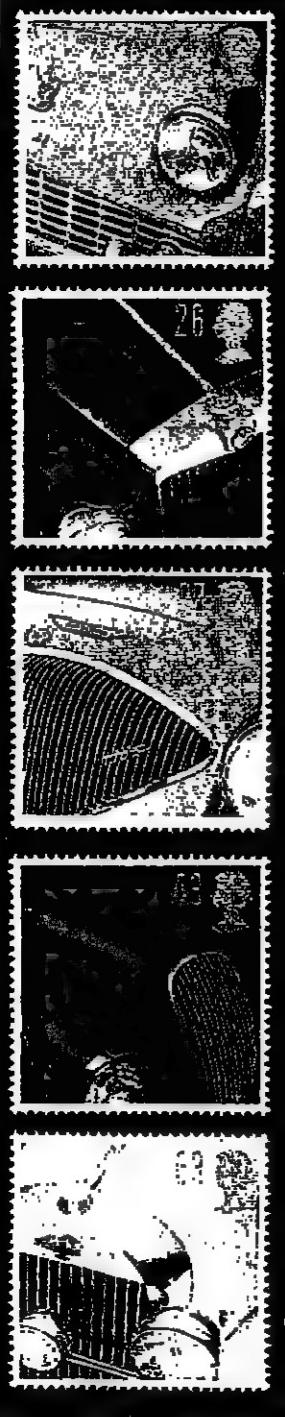
Opponents claim the switch will lead to chaos and say that Daup is vague about how much the change will cost. Walnut-Dash's avuncular deputy, John Tractor, is said to have opposed the scheme, but came on board in exchange for a promise that Soho logo designers would be allowed to join a trade union.

Walnut-Dash, speaking from beneath a video wall showing the M1 with no lanes closed off (opponents claim the film is a fake) ended his speech with a denunciation of the present government: "Seventeen years of jams! Seventeen years in which the Association of Traffic Cone Manufacturers got rich and the rest of us got late. Railways sold to millionaires! Hard shoulders packed with sobbing women!"

"I say to you today: only Daup can release the British driver from this corrupt and shaming madness. Drive back to your constituencies and prepare for government."

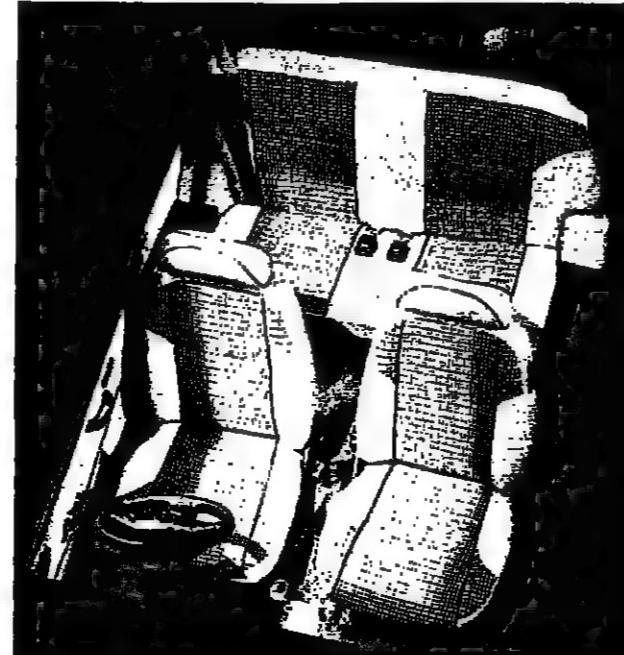
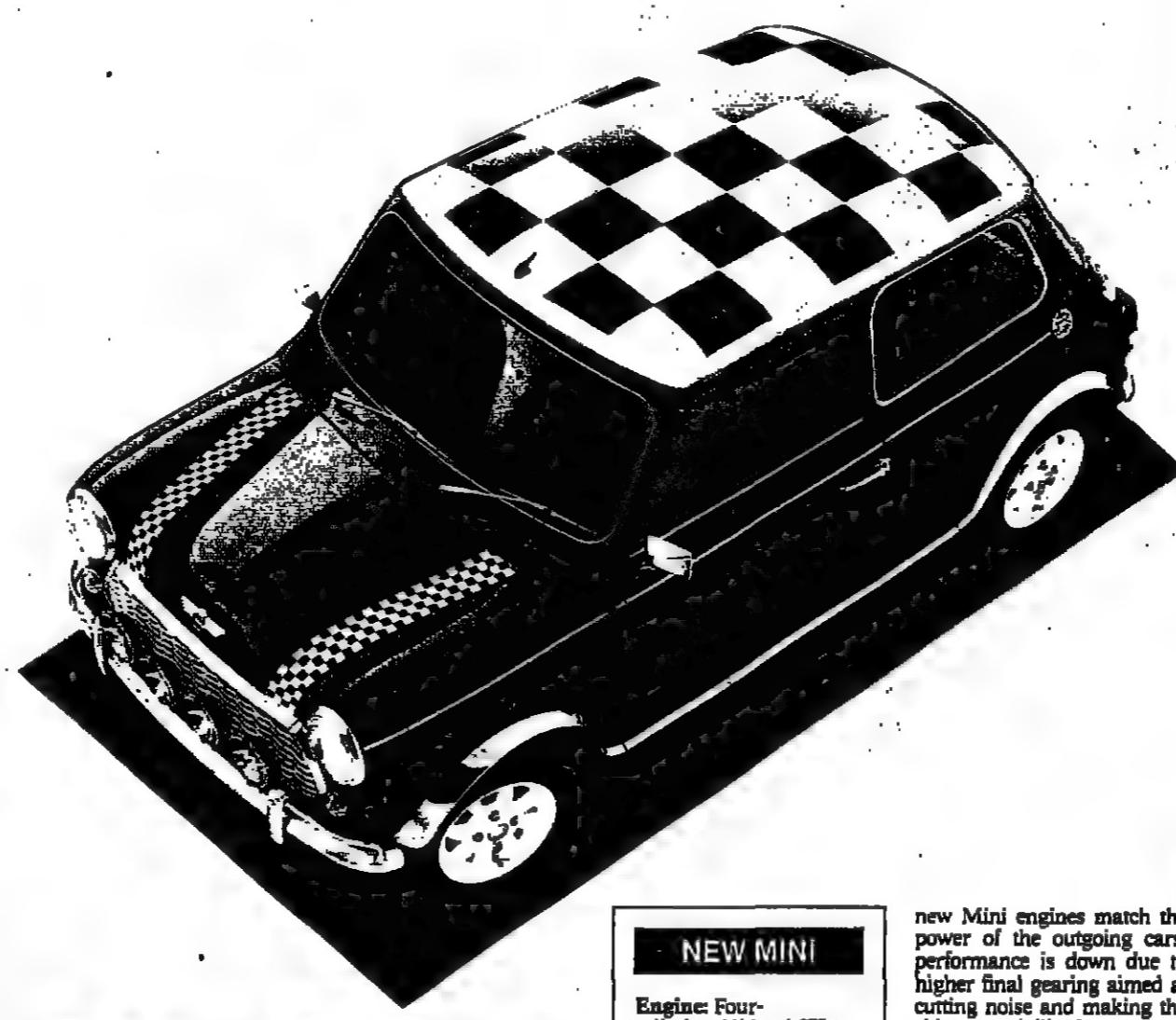
CAR PRIZES

Stamp of true classics



Grr, it's the Mini Mouth

It comes in any racy colour you like — so long, says Vaughan Freeman — as it's slower



The Italian job: racing style is more talk than torque

Typical Mini buyers are now less likely to be families seeking a second or third car, but increasingly to be single, well-educated professional and managerial people desiring a fashion statement. The Mini and the Mini Cooper have identical 63bhp engines, identical performance figures, and both can be fitted with the sluggish Sports Pack for the ultimate in street style.

What might to some appear to be a triumph of packaging over content in fact, says Rover, reflects the desires of today's Mini customers:

NEW MINI

Engine: Four-cylinder, 63bhp, 1.275cc petrol, driving four-speed manual gearbox.

0-60mph: 12.2 seconds (12.8 with Sports Pack)

Top speed: 90mph (84mph with Sports Pack)

Economy: 33.4mpg urban (including cold start), 51.8mpg out of town, 43mpg combined.

Equipment: Driver airbag, seat-belt pretensioners, side door anti-intrusion beams, wood fascia, immobiliser, alarm.

Price: £8,995.

was first launched 37 years ago, and in shape and size is virtually unchanged. Developing the car to meet ever more stringent emissions and safety regulations has presented Mini and Rover designers with a major challenge.

For the first time, the Mini gets a driver's-side airbag. New engine design, including multi-point fuel injection, means the Mini can meet all air pollution laws by borrowing on engine management technology from the Rover 800 and MGF sportster, while noise from the car has been halved at motorway speeds.

The new Minis also get the MGF steering wheel, and seats based on the design of the new Rover 200. While the

new Mini engines match the power of the outgoing cars, performance is down due to higher final gearing aimed at cutting noise and making the ride more civilised.

Rover says: "This, coupled with an inevitable weight increase of around 3.5 per cent, means a slight reduction in 'on paper' performance. The performance figures however remain very competitive."

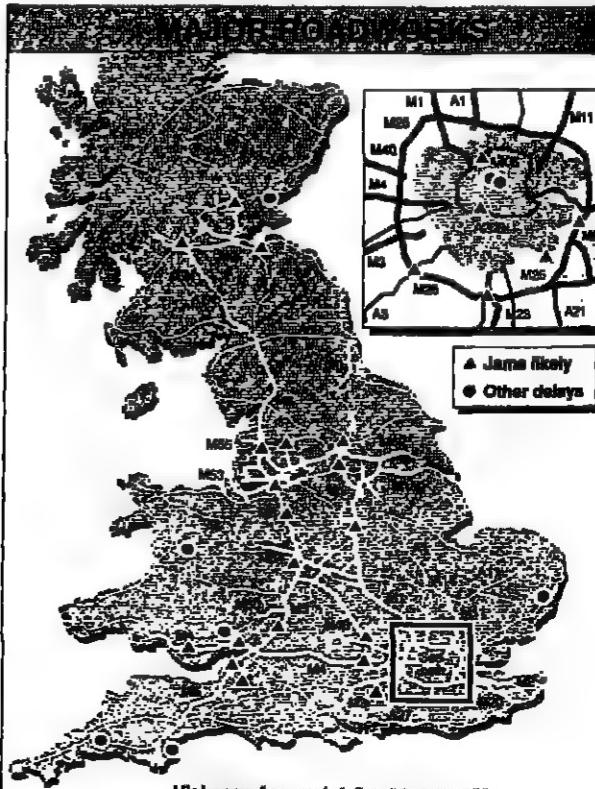
The new Mini and Mini Cooper, unveiled in the week that Rover chief executive Walter Hasselkus said Rover would be building a totally new design Mini from the year 2000, is likely to be the last version based on the mould-breaking Sir Alec Issigonis design.

Hasselkus said: "The Mini was launched in 1959, and has been an incredible success story in itself, and while I am saying that it will be replaced, it will also be a continuation. There will be a new Mini but with the same emotions of the old one".

Until the new car arrives,

Rover is hoping that this interim model will fill the gap and give Mini lovers enough to go on with. Rover says the new car has benefited from "tens of millions of pounds worth" of new investment.

Rover spokesman Denis Chick said: "People have asked us why we have spent so much money redesigning the 1997 Mini when there is a new car coming, and the answer is that the Mini is very popular still, and the name is very, very important to us, and we want to keep it strong".



NEWS IN BRIEF

Not the people's Ka

ANXIOUS to introduce opinion-formers from China, the world's biggest marketplace, to its new Ka model, Ford invited seven top Chinese journalists — including the 80-year-old editor of the *People's Daily* — to the Paris Motor Show. Six KAs were lined up ready for a tour of France's best rural roads... except for one slight hitch. Only one of the Chinese delegation could drive. A weary Ford PR man says: "Well, they can sit in it anyway."

Why aye, Nissan

NISSAN is to build a new estate car at Washington, Tyne and Wear. The £70 million investment means the plant can build about 20,000 of the Primera-based estates. Styled by Nissan in Munich, the five-seater will be for worldwide distribution. Washington is also to start making Primera diesel engines, replacing equipment previously imported from Japan.

Catholic tastes

WHEN Pope John Paul II came to Britain, he travelled around in a converted Range Rover. But his new car will be a little swankier, for the Vatican has ordered a five-litre V8 Mercedes S500, which is being tailored for Papal needs by a company called Stola in Turin.

Fiat hike

FIAT has raised prices by an average 1.6 per cent. The range now starts with the Cinquecento S at £15,682 up to the range-topping Ulysse 1.9TD EL people-carrier which will get a new sticker price of £20,131.

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ACTUALLY ONLY GOLD-PLATED

WHEN TONY BROOKS CONNAUGHT
WON AT SYRACUSE IN 1955,
HE WAS THE FIRST ALL-BRITISH
G.P. VICTORY SINCE SIR HENRY
SCHRAMM'S 1923 SUNBEAM.

IN BELGIUM IT IS ILLEGAL
TO RACE CYCLOCROS ON
THE PUBLIC HIGHWAY.

لـ ٢٠٠ من الأصل

SATURDAY OCTOBER 5 1996

Preview: inside information on the newest concept cars being shown in Europe, but not in Britain

The future: you saw it here first

■ They are the most desirable cars in the world, dream models of the future which will be drooled over by thousands of motorists — but not in Britain, *Kevin Eason* writes. For while visitors to the Paris Motor Show this week were shown a series of delectable concept cars, none of them will be coming to the British International Motor Show which opens later this month at the NEC in Birmingham.

Carmakers say the two shows come too close together to allow them enough time to transfer cars from Paris to Birmingham — which is a pity for visitors to the Birmingham show, which will celebrate 100 years of British carmaking this year. Even though Britain is one of the birthplaces of the motor industry, with more than its share of famous names, and remains an important centre for design, engineering and motor

racing, the rest of Europe does not regard the British show as having the same status as exhibitions in Paris, Frankfurt and Geneva.

The good news, though, is that Car 96 was in Paris to bring you details of the cars you cannot see (unless you are willing to book a day out on a first-class ticket to the French capital).

Cars like the F200, which was rolled out by Mercedes. Not only

does it look stunning, Mercedes

has also loaded the F200 with the gadgets the company's engineers believe we will all have on our cars in the next century.

The most astonishing innovation is in the cabin, which has none of the familiar cues of the modern motor car. Steering wheel and

pedals are abolished to be replaced by a fighter pilot-style set of

controls. To steer, the driver moves the central joystick to the left or right, accelerating by pushing the stick forward and braking by pulling it back. There are no conventional systems under the bonnet either, with the messages from the joystick sent electronically instead of mechanically.

Rear-view mirrors have been abolished, replaced by video cameras which transfer images to a dashboard video screen.

There is no key to enter, not even a remote "blipper", just a magnetic card which unlocks doors which then sweep out and over to allow a more generous entry gap. Once under way, information is relayed to the driver digitally on electronic screens while the car senses every movement, ironing out bends and bumps, the suspension adjusting to prevent the bodywork from pitching and rolling.

Even the headlamps are "intelli-

gent", providing extra light as the speed of the car increases, while the boot lid is a clever four-joint system which lever upwards to provide the maximum loading space.

They are all features Jürgen Hubert, head of Mercedes' car business, told visitors to the Paris show will be with us in the next century, the technical experimentation of today becoming the standard engineering of tomorrow. Why you will have to wait to see it.



All the German engineering money can buy: the boot lid levers upwards to provide the maximum loading space



Inside the F200, the instruments look and function more like the controls of a fighter jet than a car dashboard



ALFA ROMEO NUVOLO



NUVOLO

■ One vision of the future unveiled in Paris created such interest that although it was not originally destined for Birmingham, desperate efforts to get it to the NEC were under way this week, *Alan Capps*.

The Alfa Romeo Nuvola is a striking-looking concept which has some resemblance to the company's highly successful GTV coupé, although it is larger and its low rear end goes very much against the current trend for coupés. But under the skin Alfa has turned the clock back to the days when sports car bodies were built individually on a separate chassis.

The two-seater shown at Paris was a bold, aggressive design drawn up by Alfa's own styling centre on the



All the gadgets to take driving into the 21st century: magnetic cards unlock doors which then sweep out and over



FIAT MULTIPLA

space-frame chassis. The striking rear end has more than a hint of 1930s sports cars about it but features high-tech lights that give adequate illumination even though they lie almost flat.

There are no plans to put it into production, but it was built using techniques applicable to production rather than prototype models. Alfa says the idea was to produce a chassis which it could offer to various bespoke coach-builders to experiment with different body styles. It's an old-fashioned way to answer the current demand for more and more "niche" models.

The engine, however, is more than a concept. The 24-valve, twin turbo, 2.5-litre V6 is due to appear in a new version of the Alfa 166.

PEUGEOT ASPHALTE

Fans of arcade games will know how to start up Peugeot's Asphalt. Instead of a conventional ignition key, drivers just slip a token into the dashboard and push the start button — a bit like a Sega computer challenge. *Kevin Eason* writes.

The idea is among a torrent to come from Peugeot's design studios as the company explores the future. The question now is whether Peugeot is willing to allow those ideas to run riot through its conventional car range, for there are no plans as yet to build anything as radical as the Asphalt or its concept sister car, the Touareg.

Pity, because the Asphalt is a pretty car following in the wheeltracks of Renault's fabulous little two-seater Spider, which has gone into production. The Asphalt is similarly spartan, with no doors so the driver and passenger have to



The Touareg: off-road and hose-down technology

hop into seats which have been moulded into the body-work. The steering wheel comes off to allow the driver entry and then there are no seat adjustments; you instead adjust the pedals electronically.

The bodyshell is a tough carbon composite for strength and, if the driver is alone, a shield can be fitted over the passenger compartment for extra rigidity and protection from the elements. There is no windscreen, just wind deflectors designed to push the airflow over the heads of the two-seater's occupants.

The bonnet lies almost flat, which gave Peugeot's engineers an intriguing and important problem to solve: how to get the engine in. Their answer was to "flatten" a conventional 90 brake-horse power 1.6-litre, taken from the Peugeot 106, and rake it at a steep angle of 71 degrees,

the rear wheels are set substantially closer together than the front, allowing the rear to narrow to a teardrop-style shape. If it doesn't turn too well, at least the safety package is good: as soon as the driver clicks the seatbelt, the roll bars pop up while the cockpit has high sides.

Peugeot turned to more unconventional power for its four-wheel-drive Touareg. It has a centrally mounted 35-

kilowatt electric motor, backed up by a small four-cylinder petrol engine which can either boost power or act as a generator to restore electric power. That gives the car a range of about 190 miles and a top speed of about 70mph. The pattern of simplicity set by the Asphalt is continued in the Touareg, with designers wanting to hop into a vehicle which has no doors but which stands comparatively tall. At least

you do not have to remove the steering wheel and, once in, you can adjust the wheel and pedals for the best driving position.

Better still for the off-road enthusiast, there is nothing you can get dirty. Peugeot's young design team believes that once you get home from pounding the field with your muddy wellies, you just take a hose to the inside and give the Touareg a good soaking.



CHRYSLER LHX

■ It is the car to die for, if ever it hits British shores, *Kevin Eason* writes. Chrysler showed its LHX concept limousine but executives are hinting that the next generation of the company's biggest models will look like this. Under the bonnet is a 250 brake-horse power 3.5-litre rated to a four-speed automatic but it is the dramatic sweep of the car's lines which make it so beautiful. The sculpted nose and raked windscreen lead to a long, flat rear, held up by the fattest 20-inch



wheels. In its ultimate form there is an entertainment centre for rear-seat passengers, while all the dashboard data for the driver is housed in a central pod at eye-level.

Chrysler has become darned good at design and experts reckon the company will chop off the rear overhang of the concept model to put a slightly more compact design into production for the US within three years. But still no sign of it coming to Britain in right-hand-drive form, unfortunately.

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The competition-beating XK8 is pure Jaguar, says Kevin Eason

So cool, it could have been Lyons-made

Right price, right pace, right time: a drive in the big cat's new sports car can only silence the critics

The scope for error was vast. Bob Dover knows that living with a legend is all very well, but the expectations are high when the wraps come off every new Jaguar.

Sir William Lyons built one of the most famous names in the motoring world with a succession of ground-breaking designs to create some of the most desirable cars of all time. Trouble is that the legacy of legend can be hard to bear in a tougher world when the gap between the competition is razor thin.

But Mr Dover can sleep easily in his bed tonight, for the XK8 is a car that Sir William would have approved of. Jaguar has found the perfect balance between the grand tourer and nimble sports car ... and at a bargain-basement price that will set the competition on its ear. All Sir William's cars were value-for-money, and XK8 is no different: £47,950 for the coupé — between £32,000 and £35,000 cheaper than BMW, Mercedes or Aston Martin rivals offering equivalent performance and equipment.

The XK8 was the most demanding programme yet set for Jaguar by its Ford owner because it had to be delivered from concept to finished car in 30 months. In fact, the engineering team came in three months ahead of schedule — a cost saving of about £30 million — and they surpassed every tough target set on quality to make this the best-built Jaguar ever, according to Nick Scheele, Jaguar's chairman. This is a British car that could set Japanese standards for reliability and quality, he says, levels which could never be achieved on the outgoing XJS.

Because XK8 is based on the old XJS platform, worries run high that the car would be little more than a revamp of the old barge. The XJS has been Jaguar's best-selling sports car, but it had 20 years of production and, in truth, was as unloved as a car can get, with more flying buttresses than the average cathedral. Any carry-over would have destroyed the XK8's chances. In fact, Dover, XK8's chief engineer, says that the car is 80 per cent new, 10 per cent from the XJ saloons and only about 10 per cent — essentially the platform — from the XJS.

At the heart of the changes is a new power-train which is as much a step forward as anything to have come from Jaguar in its history. Jaguar has had only three generations of engine since 1948, all six and 12-cylinder power-packs. The fourth generation departs radically from history in that it is built outside the company — by Ford in Bridgend though designed entirely in-house — and that it is a V8, which is refined, effortless and

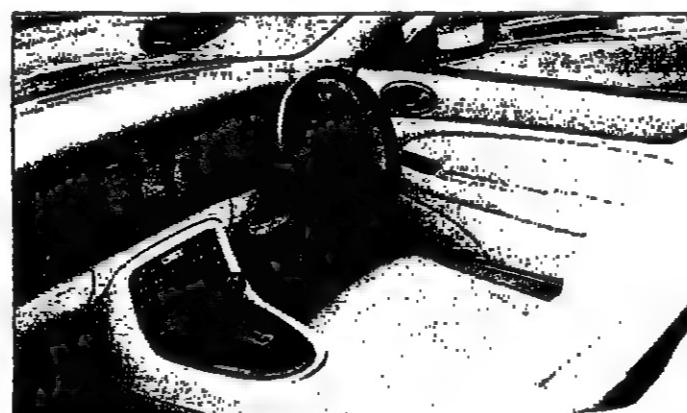


The bonnet diving down to the E-Type style grille is as distinctive a piece of imagery as anything currently on the road. Beneath lies an all-new V8 which proves refined, effortless and powerful

powerful with astonishing acceleration, in the mid-range — the place you need it when you want to overtake or pull through tricky uphill bends. Dover reckons the engineering team wanted the torque, or pulling power, to feed in as soon as the throttle is pushed and there is no doubt that they got it right.

There is no manual gearchange, because Jaguar says that there is no demand. No wonder, because the new five-speed automatic transmission is so smooth and efficient that changes up or down are barely noticed.

While other carmakers have added sequential semi-automatic gearboxes — so the driver pushes forward to change up and back to go down — as the manual alternative in an auto box, Jaguar has stuck resolutely to its J-gate system. It was the right decision because it is so easy to use, the stick simply pushed from second to third and so on. Unlike a sequential change, the driver always knows what gear the car is in because of the location of the gearstick.



Traditional interior comforts feature a magical sound system

Not that even a run of tough and twisting roads needed much gear-changing on first test, such is the flexibility of the new power-train. Second will take the car up to almost 90mph; the V8 growling gently under the long, litany hood. Even when working the car hard, the ride is stable but with enough feedback through the wheel to allow the driver to feel sports-car responses. Where the

old XJS wallowed, the XK8 springs into action, turning sharply and accurately, the ride always predictable and sure-footed.

Part of that responsiveness comes from a much-improved body and chassis, which is 25 per cent stiffer than the XJS so that there is no flexing of metal through bumps and lumps. Add to that the sort of ride you would expect to feel in a Jaguar and the car becomes

one of the most enjoyable to drive in any price bracket, not least because the company has retained the virtues prized most by its traditional buyers.

Forget criticism you might have read that XK8 is too bulky and too like its distant and also Ford-owned cousin, the Aston Martin DB7: I defy anyone to tell me that the XK8 does not look fabulous, particularly as a convertible. The

bonnet diving down to the E-Type style grille is as distinctive a piece of imagery as anything currently on the road, as you will discover when you see an XK8 appear in your rear-view mirror.

Inside, the XK8 offers the traditional comforts: wood and tasteful leather, a restful but clear set of dials ... and one new option which blasts the opposition: a 240-watt, ten-speaker sound system tailored

to the XK8's acoustics by Harmon Kardon, the American specialists. After a window-rattling session with Messrs Elgar, Saint-Saëns and Sting, the system catapulted itself from Jaguar option to a "must have" for me.

That touch of extra magic — rarely found among even the most expensive cars — speaks volumes for Jaguar. Other carmakers could produce a valid argument on behalf of the cars competing with the XK8 in an almost overcrowded marketplace. Mercedes could argue for the logic of its engineering, BMW for its reliability, Porsche for its sporting heritage.

But marques rarely appeal to the heart in the way that Jaguar does. The engineering of the XK8 is not just the best to have come out of Coventry in the 60 years since the business was founded, but the car is covered in tiny details, touches which make the driver and passenger feel special as soon as they clutch the keys.

Bob Dover's brief said the XK8 had to be "sensual, instantly desirable, exhilarating and stir emotions". It is and it does.

E-TYPE VXK8



The quarter-century difference belies some striking similarities

Model: Series II fixed-head coupé 2+2.

Engine: 4.2 litre, six-cylinder, 265 bhp.

Dimensions: wheelbase: 8ft 9in, length: 15ft 4in, width: 5ft 6in.

Top speed: 139mph.

0-60: 7.4 secs.

Consumption: avg. 18.20 mpg; touring, 25 mpg.

Insurance: £200-£250 on an agreed-value, limited-mileage (3,000 miles annually) classic car policy.

Original Price: £2,708.71

Value: £25,000.

maple veneers are stained so dark and lacquered so heavily as to be indistinguishable from high-grade plastic, and its leather is perfection.

Where the XK8's ride is a muscular glide, distancing the driver from any physical discomforts from the road surface, the E-Type's is more informative, communicating what is underneath without relaying much of its harshness. For a sports car built 26 years ago, the ride is remarkably good.

Both cars share a similarly mesmeric presence on the road. Wherever I drove it, the XK8's subtle, sensuous shape swivelled heads in its wake. But they were being turned more by its novelty-days ahead of its official release.

The E-Type commanded just as much attention. But no novelty here — it was simply in warm admiration of an unarguably, dramatically beautiful car.

If an XK8 driving past in the year 2022 still earns as many second looks as a renovated E-Type does today, only then can it truly pass as a worthy successor.

DB7 VXK8



Gorgeous looks, but at a price

Model: Aston Martin DB7 3.2 litre

Engine: supercharged in-line 355bhp six-cylinder.

Top speed: 165mph.

Dimensions: length: 4,646mm, width: 1,830mm.

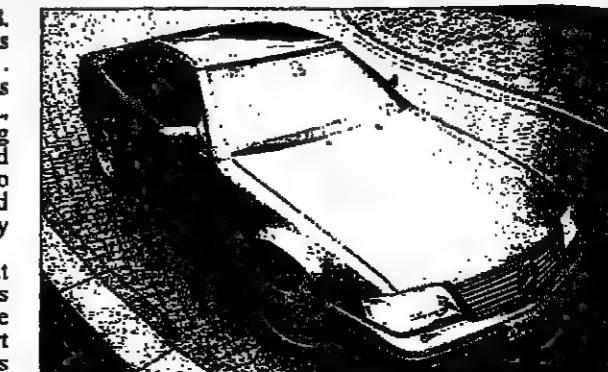
Price: Coupé £82,500, convertible £89,500.

The similarity between the Aston Martin DB7 and the XK8 could be too close for comfort — for Aston, anyway. Those curved DB7 haunches and long overhangs tell the story of its heritage, cloned from the Jaguar XJS platform and with a straight-six supercharged 3.2-litre developed from a Jaguar race engine.

Performance figures are roughly similar, and, of course, an Aston is strong on traditional wood and leather like the Jag. But it would be too simple to say the cars are the same. The power characteristics are very different, and the Aston feels tauter and somehow smaller than the XK8, even though the dimensions are similar.

Being part of the same Ford family should not be a problem, although the XK8's value for money could be trying for Aston. Look for some Aston derivatives soon to try to catch the eye.

MERCEDES 500SL V XK8



By comparison, it's both overweight and overpriced

Model: Mercedes SL500.

Engine: 5-litre, 32-valve V8 developing 326bhp through five-speed automatic transmission driving rear wheels.

Top speed: 155mph (electronically limited).

Consumption: 17.7mpg in town.

Dimensions: length 4,740mm, width 1,812mm.

Price: £80,700 basic.

The result in the SL500, which offers almost similar performance to an XK8, is of a bloated, muscle-bound motor — like being lugged by one of the Gladiators rather than waited and beguiled.

Acceleration is bludgeoning, but the sound feedback from the Merc's V8 is industrial rather than seductive. However, the handling is as safe and sound as you would expect from a Mercedes, huge rear tyres spreading themselves all over the road seemingly defying the gods to overcome their sticking power and the traction con-

tro system to trick it into a flurry of wheelspin.

The interior of the car is about as welcoming as a prison cell. Mercedes gives you plenty of leather but the instrument dial remains functional to the point of monochrome boredom, the steering wheel apparently comes straight from the deck of a leather-bound yacht and the automatic gearbox is too notchy and twiddly for rapid use for all but the extremely well practised. Of course, there is more equipment than even NASA could use on a busy day, but that does not make the model more loveable. In fact, the SL — a car born in the 1960s when big was better — looks fatidic in the Nineties when sweeping shapes and curves are in.

There is another thing if you are deciding about buying a new sports car: the range starts at £52,000 for the 2.8-litre and goes up to £97,450 for the SL60 AMG. And you still have to buy your own stereo.

SATURDAY OCTOBER 5 1996

CAR 96

ROADTEST

Ford's subtle rocket

You expect a car like the Mondeo 24v to come with at least one set of go-faster stripes and a rear wing about the size of Concorde's," writes Kevin Eason. But there is nothing, just a discreet side-badge which says 24v, and some entertainingly large tyres.

The 2.5-litre V6 engine has torque and rasping power that will leave many a sports car gasping. Power is fed in so low down in the engine revs, the car is wonderfully driveable at all speeds. In fact, the package is so good, I wonder why so many people spend so much on cars which might have more prestigious badges.

The 24v is the top of the Mondeo range, which has now been revamped. We have only been able to test the star



Wide wheels and subtle badging apart, Ford's new Mondeo does little to advertise its status as a sports-car beater

competitor to BMW or Mercedes is under the bonnet; the 2.5-litre Duratec is a revelation, with a wide powerband making overtaking easy. Just slipping the Mondeo 24v into second or third is enough to get full torque low down, so when you floor the throttle, the car is away immediately.

BMW and Mercedes drivers might think they have more cachet in their cars, but I guarantee that motorists who enjoy driving would not walk away from a Mondeo 24v after a test. It really is that good.

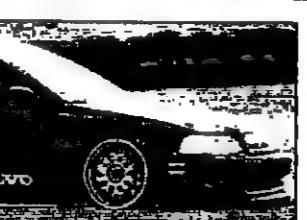
Where the 24v becomes a



of the line-up, so we will bring news later of the rest.

Fifteen-inch wheels are fitted to most of the 2.5-litre models, with 16-inchers on the sports ST-24. Inside, there is wood and leather if you want it — I prefer to do without both. Depending where you enter the 24v range, there is air conditioning in a cabin which is both ergonomic and welcoming, and enhanced by one of the new-generation Ford sound systems which has large-format buttons.

The 24v is the top of the Mondeo range, which has now been revamped. We have only been able to test the star



The S40 will be prepared by Damon Hill's new boss

It's another exciting Volvo

THE VOLVO 850, which has become such a familiar star on touring-car race tracks, is to give way to a racing version of the stylish new S40 model, writes Alan Cope. The 850, in the hands of Swedish driver Rickard Rydell, won four races in the British Touring Car Championship this year to give him third place in the drivers' contest and Volvo third place in the manufacturers' title. Frank Biela and Audi won the two championships.

THE RACING 850 has been a key element in the company's successful campaign to transform its image from supplier of staid estates to creator of exciting road cars. Like the 850, the racing version of the highly-praised S40 will be prepared at Linfield in Oxfordshire by Tom Walkinshaw, the racing specialist who also owns the Arrows Formula One team and has just become Damon Hill's new boss.

Prestige German saloons and a fun-loving two-seat open-top sportster are this week's used-car stars, says price experts CAP Black Book, Vaughan Freeman writes.

Showing strongest used prices is the BMW 3-Series of 1992-95. High-mileage examples especially (60,000 to 100,000 miles) are doing best, with a 1993 3-reg 318i SE fetching £10,110. A must for buyer or seller is a full service history stuffed with BMW stamps. Metallic paint is another feature which will ensure a strong resale value.

Another German fetching good prices is the Mercedes-Benz E-Class. A 1995 E230 Elegance on 10,000 miles will fetch £29,995 retail, and desperate dealers will buy practically anything, regardless of colour or equipment.

Mazda's cute MX-5, despite the onset of autumn, is enjoying

FORECOURT



a boom, ironically fuelled by the arrival of the Rover MGF. Every magazine report on the Rover car invariably refers, flatteringly, to its MX-5 rival. A 1992-93 car, costing £18,500 when new, will sell for £13,000, with the Special Edition leather, wood and carpeted versions, most sought after.

Not doing so well is the

Honda Shuttle people carrier. Despite top-class reliability and build quality, the Shuttle simply is not popular, largely because its high new price of around £24,000 is reflected in used values. Only used examples at under £20,000, such as the 1995 2.2-litre Shuttle on 10,000 miles for £18,000, are likely to find customers.

The Ford Escort Cosworth is as hot in the market as it is on the road. Seen by many as a future classic car, high retail prices are being fetched by examples that have a full service history. Sadly, there are few around in pristine condition. Long top of the thief's hit list, many have been recovered damaged after being stolen or, having proved too potent for their owner, repaired after an accident. A good-condition 1995 M-registered car with leather upholstery, low mileage and FSH, should fetch £24,000.

SPARE PARTS

History sold and shown

CHRYSLER Jeep is going back to its roots by unveiling an all-new Jeep Wrangler at the Birmingham motor show later this month, writes Alan Cope. The Wrangler, ultimate successor to the Second World War general-purpose vehicle that gave the world the word "jeep", has been completely updated for a new right-hand drive version.

Other new vehicles include, for the first time in Britain, the Chrysler Voyager, claimed to be the world's first people-carrier, which has sold seven million worldwide since its launch in 1984.



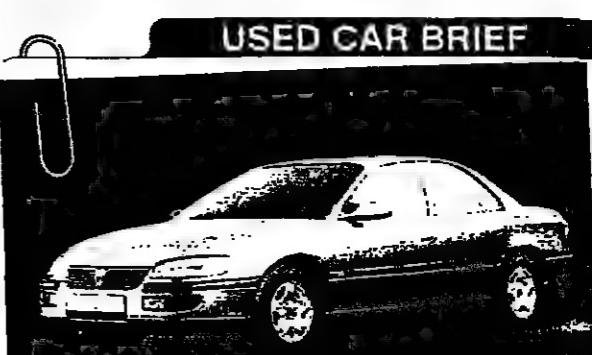
New Jeeps set for Britain

RACE overalls worn by three-times world champion Jackie Stewart in the 1971 Monaco Grand Prix, sold for £22,452 (against an estimate of £18,000) at Brooks's Formula One sale in London last Monday. Stirling Moss's first white race helmet fetched £20,450.



High price for GP jacket

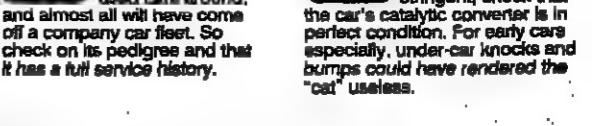
THE TWIN centenaries of the British motor industry and cinema are being celebrated at a specially created venue, the Ultimate Drive-In at Centenary Square, Birmingham. Kevin Costner's golfing movie *The Tin Cup* has its premiere on October 13.



Vauxhall Omega Vauxhall's big car, the Omega, replaced the Carlton and Senator which had earned their spurs as high-mileage motorway workhorses with police forces nationwide. Launched in 1994, the Omega four-door saloon and five-door estate range has endless engine options, from the 2-litre eight and 16-valve, to 2.5 and 3-litre V6, and the 2.5-litre turbocharged, sourced from BMW.

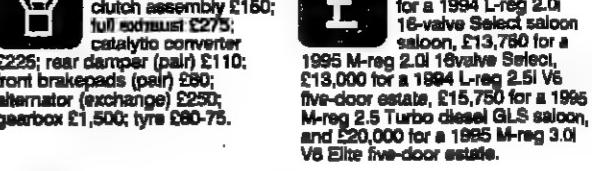
GOOD NEWS Built to rival the BMWs and Rovers of this world, the Omega features suitably admirable build quality. In trade, there is plenty of luggage space, as well as room for plastic. Check that trim and upholstery are as healthy-looking as the rest of the car should be.

BAD NEWS Inside the car has earned some criticism for over-exuberant use of plastic. Check that trim and upholstery are as healthy-looking as the rest of the car should be.



AVOID As the emissions element of the MoT gets ever more stringent, check that the car's catalytic converter is in perfect condition. For early cars especially, under-car knocks and bumps could render the "cat" useless.

INSURANCE A 1994 2-litre Omega costs a 55-year-old man in Winchester £224 with full no claims bonus. £244 fully comprehensive. A similar female driver, 22-year-old male, with one year no claims living in South London pays £1,992, a similar female £1,794. (AA insurance 0800 444777)



PRICES Expect to pay £11,000 for a 1994 1-reg 2.0i 16-valve Select saloon, £13,750 for a 1995 M-reg 2.0i 16-valve Select, £13,000 for a 1995 2.0i 16-valve estate, £15,750 for a 1995 M-reg 2.5 Turbo diesel GLS saloon, and £20,000 for a 1995 M-reg 3.0i V6 Elite five-door estate.

OVERALL Even a high mileage two-year-old Omega has a decade of honest driving left in it. Big cars always depreciate fastest and there are huge savings to be had buying such cars second-hand rather than new. The Omega is a genuine modern car, safe, sophisticated and economical to run, as well as superbly comfortable on long journeys even in 2-litre 16-valve form.

BMW

BMW WANTED

BMW Model 5 + 7 Series + 325
Benz 2000 + 2000 CD
M3 + 323i + 325i + 328i + 328i
M5 + 520i + 525i + 528i + 530i + 535i
M6 + 620i + 623i + 625i + 628i + 630i
M7 + 720i + 725i + 730i + 735i + 740i
M8 + 820i + 825i + 830i + 835i + 840i
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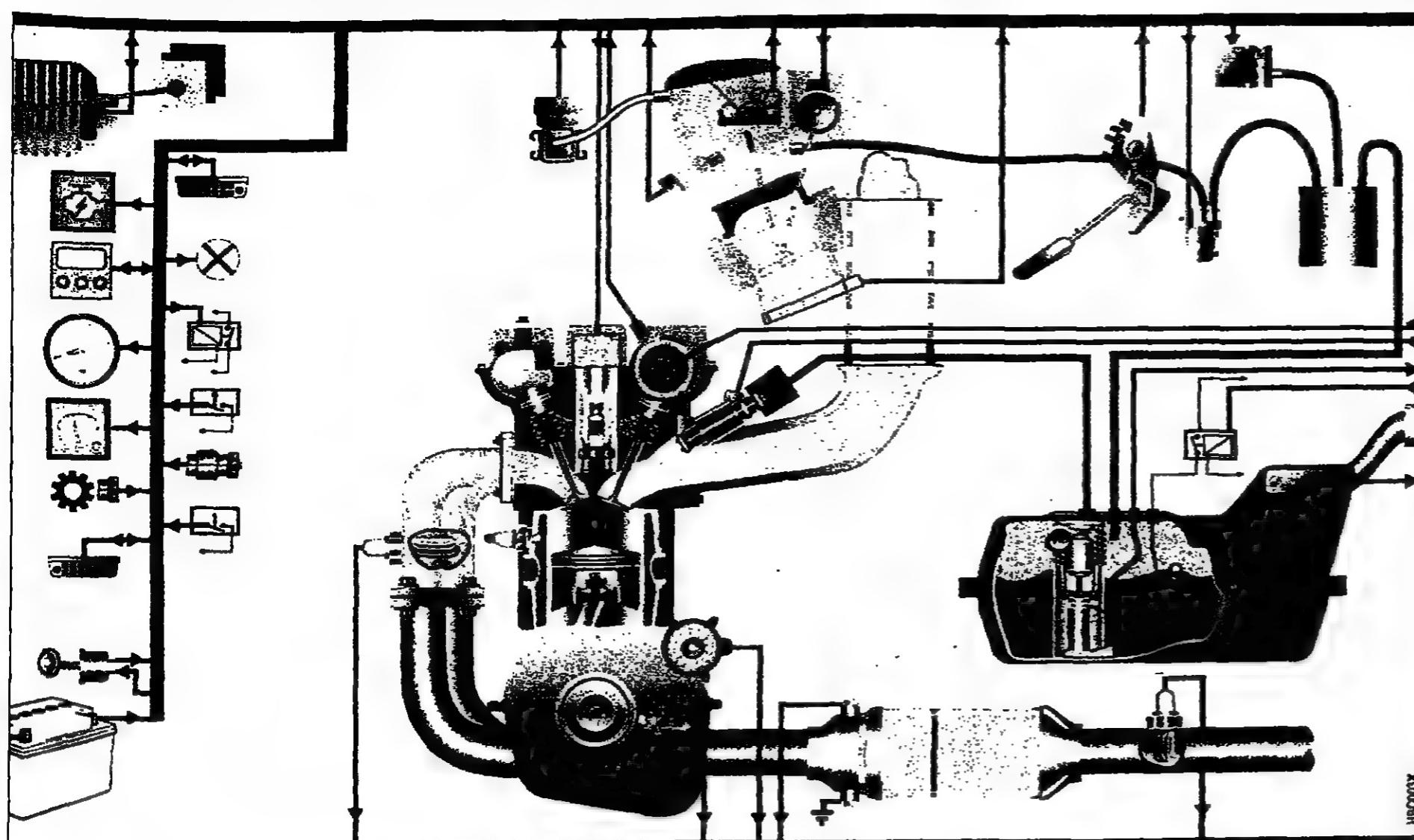
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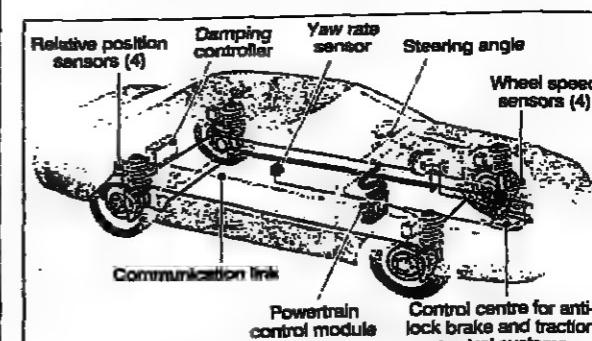
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Alan Cops reports how new-generation technology is making motoring significantly safer and cleaner



INTELLIGENT CHASSIS CONTROL

Anti-spin gives more than an even brake in a crisis



The system uses many existing car components

I won't spin the car completely because I'm going to be doing this demonstration all day and I don't want to wreck the tyres," said my driver as he set off to demonstrate the virtues of Traxcar, Delphi's "intelligent chassis control system", which is designed to enhance safety in all conditions.

We were heading across the asphalt acres of Mortefontaine at about 50mph. A few seconds later he wrenched the steering wheel violently to the right simulating an attempt to avoid a collision. In a split-second of screaming, smoking rubber the Saab 9000 pivoted through a full 360 degrees.

"Now, that was with the system switched off. It will help show you the contrast," he laughed. With the system on, we approached a row of cones across. He wrenched the wheel to the right. Yes, the car lurched; the tyres squealed, the brakes were firmly on. But he completed the manoeuvre keeping full control and the car emerged

from the "emergency" steady and straight. Traxcar is already in use in the United States and is expected in Europe very soon. It is one of a series of safety measures that can be introduced using many existing components on a car. For example, it uses the same set of sensors as an anti-lock braking system.

The version fitted to the Saab worked by comparing the yaw rate of the car (the way in which it sways about its centre of gravity) with the driver's movement of the steering wheel. If then varies the engine's power and can selectively apply individual brakes to maintain maximum stability.

For example, if a driver is accelerating into a left-hand turn, the system might apply the left front brake to maintain a stable direction and reduce power. It can be tuned to take account of a car's intended performance, so it might allow more leeway in a sports car than in a family saloon.

Emissions impossible?

Smart cars are set to become the heart of tomorrow's green engines

By the year 2000, your car will need not just a catalytic converter but an array of gadgets to check that the catalyst is working correctly and warn the driver if anything goes wrong with it.

Converters may have contributed to reducing pollution so far, but in the second wave of controls on emissions, already drawn up in California for introduction in 1997 and due to become mandatory in Europe in 2000, the demands placed on them will be much greater.

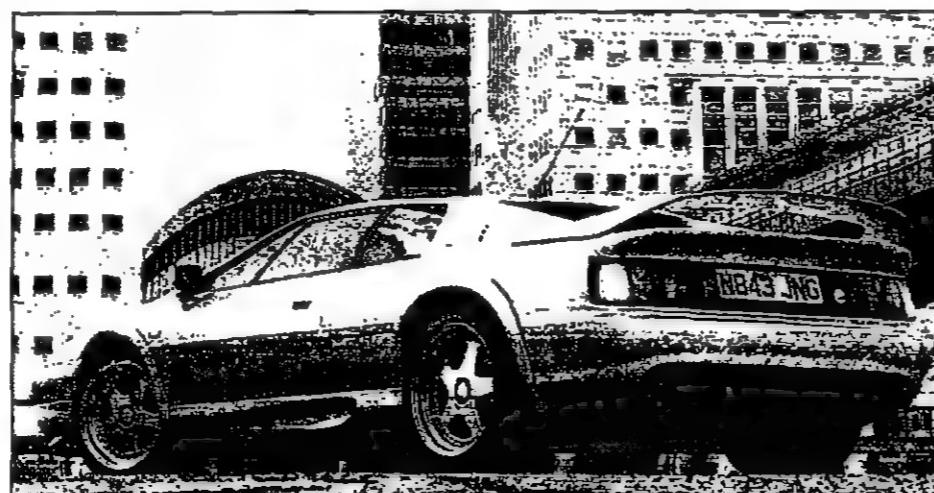
There are two problems with converters in their present form: they are delicate pieces of equipment, slung vulnerably beneath the car and therefore easily damaged; and they take some minutes to warm up and become fully effective. Some critics claim this makes them virtually useless on short urban journeys.

At present a 40-second delay is allowed between start-up and the collection of exhaust gases to check the efficiency of a converter. Under the new rules, converters will be required to operate immediately and they will also have to be constantly monitored so drivers can be warned immediately if they lose effectiveness.

The technology to meet these demands already exists. It featured among a number of developments — which can be expected to appear in production cars very soon — demonstrated by Delphi Automotive Systems, the world's largest supplier of car components and part of the General Motors empire, at its first European Ride and Drive day at the French motor industry's Mortefontaine test track.

One of the more surprising vehicles to find at such an event was a Lotus Esprit V8.

But this product of Norfolk is one of the vehicles on the road which already meets the emission standards for 2000, deman-



Lotus's Esprit V8 already meets stringent 21st-century exhaust laws. But dull it isn't

onstrating conclusively that an environmentally friendly car does not have to be a dull passenger transport.

When Lotus set about designing its all-new engine, it built in features that would allow the exhaust system to be adapted to meet not only the emission standards but also the demands for monitoring, known by the clumsy acronym

of EOBD — European On-Board-Diagnostics. The V8 uses a number of Delphi components, chiefly a valve which recirculates exhaust gas into the engine intake, increasing fuel economy and reducing nitrogen oxide emissions. It also has Multec fuel injectors designed to meet high-performance requirements.

The Lotus was there to

CLEAN-AIR SOLUTIONS

The system above includes a fuel tank (black, centre right) with evaporation control. The inlet flow (yellow) includes an air-assisted fuel injector, while oxygen sensors monitor the exhaust (red) and heated catalytic converter (orange).

warm-up converter next to the exhaust manifold under the bonnet, where it reaches the right working temperature immediately. When the engine is started a valve opens and directs the exhaust through this converter until the main one has reached working temperature. A by-pass valve then closes off the warm-up converter.

The main converter also has oxygen sensors at each end to monitor its efficiency, and another sensor to detect any engine misfiring. These sensors are connected to the engine management unit. So, for example, if the oxygen sensor at the rear of the converter detects an excess of unburnt hydrocarbons, indicating that the fuel mixture is

too rich, it can instantly restrict flow through the injection system to correct the balance and achieve a "clean burning" mixture. If such corrective action fails it illuminates a dashboard warning light to show the driver he has a faulty catalyst.

A n extra device was fitted to the Astra which enabled the engineer in the passenger seat to induce a misfire. A 2 per cent misfire introduced during normal driving was barely perceptible, yet it produced a 50 per cent increase in emissions. Illustrating the value of monitoring.

But it is not just the air outside the car that the Delphi engineers have been con-

cerned with keeping clean. Another demonstration car, with air conditioning, was fitted with a pollution sensor mounted against the cabin air inlet. If it registered heavily polluted air, for example if the car was following a smoky lorry, it closed the inlet and automatically switched the unit to recirculate the air already in the cabin. It also had a warning light to indicate when the pollen filter was exhausted. Such a system has already been installed on some 5-Series BMWs.

When the peak of pollution is past, the unit opens the inlet to ensure a renewed supply of fresh air, something which many drivers who take the same precaution manually find it all too easy to forget.

Win a day on the track worth £165

Today The Times, in association with Everyman Motor Racing at Mallory Park, offers readers the chance to test their driving skills with a prize worth £165.

The winner can choose from a wide range of driving activities, including racing cars, rally cars, off-road cars, plus he or she can tackle a tank and military vehicles. Two runners-up receive a pair of tickets to any race meeting of their choice — and there are 40 to choose from — at Mallory Park, Leicestershire.

All you have to do is enter our competition hotline 0891-405 032 with your answer to the following question:

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CHECK YOUR SCORE

Players can check the scores and positions of their teams by calling the hotline number below (Republic of Ireland readers should call 004 499 020 0501). Remember to have your 10-digit PIN number handy when you call. The line currently carries all positions after the Portuguese Grand Prix and will be updated again on Wednesday October 16.

CALL 0891-774 734 24-HRS

0891 calls are charged at 39p per minute cheap rate and 48p per minute at all other times

FANTASY LEAGUE UPDATE

Stars thrash home racers

WHILE ALL eyes will be on the title struggle between Damon Hill and Jacques Villeneuve at the Japanese Grand Prix at Suzuka next weekend, one man in the BBC commentary box will be more confident of victory than either of the Williams drivers.

In the CAR 96 Formula One Fantasy Drive Celebrity Team League, Jonathan Palmer enters the final race with an almost unassassable lead of 117 points over his nearest rival Nick Mason of Pink Floyd. If there's anything to be learned from this exercise it seems that a certain amount of track-craft counts. Palmer obviously learned this during a ten-year Formula One career, and rock drummer Mason regularly drives in historic races. Meanwhile, third place is held by Stirling Moss.

The Palmer Promosport team of Hill, Villeneuve, Häkkinen, Barrichello, Salo, Panis, Rosset and Badoer has been among the front runners all season and now has an impressive 7,798 points, which would put it around 20th in the overall contest. Unfortunately Palmer's prize is unlikely to match the £10,000 jackpot on offer to our main winner.

Mason's Ten Tenth's team has the same drivers in every category except for World Champion Michael Schumacher in place of Damon Hill, and has accumulated 7,681 points.

The Stirling Moss Automobile Racing Team of Hill, Villeneuve, Häkkinen, Brundle, Salo, Panis, Rosset and Montemini is on 7,469. Since the maximum points scored by any driver in any race has rarely exceeded 120, and because the leading teams are so similar the chance of these positions changing seems slim. The rest of our contestants, in order are: Louise Aitken Walker, 7,441 points; Sir David Steel, 7,217; Tess Shrimpton, 6,949; Chris Rea, 6,923; Carol Vorderman, 6,901; Lord March, 6,234 and, gentlemanly as always and allowing our distinguished guests to go ahead, Team CAR 96 (Kevin Eason and Alan Cops) on 6,068 points.

Perhaps Damon Hill might take some comfort from the fact that the team at the bottom of that list was the only one to select at the beginning of the season Heinz-Harald Frentzen, the German driver who is to supplant him at Williams next season.



Jonathan Palmer has taken a significant lead

GT RACING COMPETITION

Win Silverstone tickets



The hard and fast Privilege Insurance GT races feature close cousins of road cars

One of the most exciting and spectacular forms of motor sport GT racing has made a worldwide comeback in the past few seasons, and next Saturday sees the final round of the British Championship at Silverstone. Today, CAR 96, in association with Privilege Insurance, sponsors of the eight-race series, offers readers a chance to win ten pairs of VIP race tickets.

The Privilege GT championship is the compact version of Le Mans racing. It features not only the big guns of McLaren and Jaguar but a whole host of British specialist manufacturers such as Marcos, TVR and Harrier. Its class structure was changed this year to fall in line with the famous French 24-hour race and the Global GT series.

The British races have been dominated by the 600bhp McLaren F1 GTR of Ian Flux and Jake Ulrich who have a commanding lead in the championship after winning a series of duels with the Porsche 993 GT1 of John Gresley and

John Morrison. But the McLaren team has also experienced some stirring battles against surprising opposition. The Marcos LM500 of Cor Euser and Thomas Erdos, which won the first race at Silverstone in March, has twice beaten the mighty F1 and there have also been overall victories for Win Percy in the Harrier L99C, Frenchman Marc Mair in a Renault Spider V6 and the TVR Cerbera of Mark Hales and Phil Andrews. The Marcos LM600 of Schirle and Warnock leads the Class Two championship.

The attraction of this class of racing is that most of the cars are closely related to road-going versions, and the close racing on tight circuits makes a dramatic spectacle. Each 45-minute race must include one pit stop for a driver change. The series this year has attracted coverage from Sky Sports and Eurosport, and Privilege is planning to continue its sponsorship next season.

Jin Wallace, Marketing Director for Privilege, says: "This series is the perfect fit

for us. Privilege specialises in providing affordable premiums to drivers who traditionally find insurance either difficult or expensive to arrange." Those include drivers of sports, high performance or luxury cars, the young and those with a bad driving record.

The prizes are ten pairs of race tickets to the Silverstone race on October 13, to include a three-course lunch and hospitality in the Jimmy Brown suite which overlooks the pit lane and will include access to the pits.

For your chance to win, call our hotline on 0839 444 519 before midnight on Monday, October 7, with your answer to this question:

Who won the first race of the 1996 Privilege GT series?

The ten winners will be selected at random from all correct entries received by the closing date. Normal Times Newspapers competition rules apply. Costs (per minute) 39p cheap rate, 49p at all other times. Privilege Quoteline: 0800 501 941

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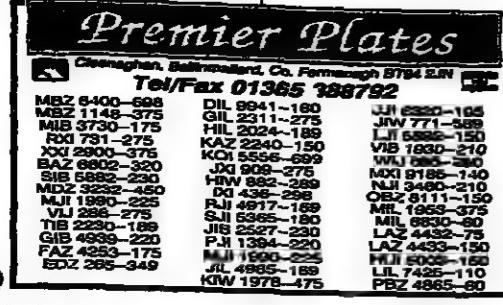
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Awards judge Sue Baker explains the tough tests vehicles face in the search for the caravanner's best car

Hunt is on for the best tow-job

An outrageous squealing of tyres rent the air. One car was hurtling through a tight series of bends. Another was powering round a steep banked curve into a fast straight stretch of Tarmac.

The location was a test track, and cars were being put punishingly through their paces. What was unusual about this particular test session was that in the wake of every hard-driven car was a caravan. The vehicles undergoing rigorous assessment were contenders for the Caravan Club's Towcar of the Year awards, being judged by a heavy-footed panel of drivers.

The annual awards decide which cars new on the market in the past year deserve accolades as best suited to the controversial task of lugging caravans about the country. The Caravan Club has been running the competition for 14 years for the enlightenment of its 285,000 members.

The judging is performed over two days at a Surrey test track every September, in preparation for an awards ceremony in London during October. This year, 39 cars from 19 manufacturers were vying for trophies. I drove them all. I am one of the judges.

Admitting to the fact requires a thick skin and a modicum of

bravado. Saying that you evaluate cars for their proficiency at towing caravans is akin to admitting to being Jeremy Clarkson's hairdresser, or a Val Doonican fan, or someone who irons their jeans.

For caravanners, derision is a familiar experience. But I make no apology for my involvement in the towcar competition. As an exercise in car assessment, it is both rewarding and revealing, on several counts.

Driving a car with a caravan hooked up behind magnifies its inherent characteristics. A car which tows well has a fundamental engineering integrity, thus indicating a tendency to behave creditably in most other situations.

Equally, few mechanical or behavioural flaws escape scrutiny when a lump weighing nearly as much again as the car towing it is being hauled along behind, especially when the car is being driven as energetically as typically happens during towcar judging.

There's the rub. The soundly competent behaviour of most properly matched, modern car-trailer rigs when being driven at an unusually pressurised pace is telling.

It shows that there is no cause for caravans to be driven like the lumbering mobile chicanes which anecdotally hinder and infuriate

other traffic during the congested holiday season.

The tests each competing car undergoes are extensive. They are assessed for their acceleration from a standing start and between 30 and 60mph, the overtaking zone; for stability at speed; for their clean pull-away from a steep hill-start and the ability of the handbrake to hold the rig on the same slope.

Traction, gearbox, suitability, brakes, handling and manoeuvring, driver ergonomics, operating costs and value for money within a price class are all judged, in a total of 11 categories with up to 21 points awarded by each judge in each category.

Cars are also assessed for their practical suitability for caravanning, such as access to the boot when hitched, and whether commonly used equipment can be stowed upright inside the car. To put the cars being judged for the towcar awards on an even playing field, all the caravans used in the tests are ballasted to bring their weight to precisely 85 per cent of that of the car under test.

The car's tyre pressures are increased in accordance with the manufacturers' recommendation for towing, and concrete blocks are placed in the front footwell to represent a passenger's weight.

One of the reasons underlying caravanning's slightly tainted reputation may well be the inexperience of some people new to towing,



Sue Baker: a proud towcar judge, despite the derision heaped upon caravanners, as the rigorous tests can expose any car's flaws

Towcar judges drive alone, but few

caravanners do.

Caravanners may be the continual butt of mirth, but judging the towcar awards is no joke. It is as scientific as the organisers can make it, and the results pay tribute to the integrity of the winning cars.

One of the reasons underlying caravanning's slightly tainted reputation may well be the inexperience of some people new to towing,

who try to pull oversized vans with undersized cars. Another may be due to those who take to the road without having mastered the back-to-front art of reversing a towed rig.

There is no excuse for caravanners to be a pain in the back lane and an irritation to other road users.

The Caravan Club runs courses to guide novices through the more demanding intricacies of caravan management, towing and

manoeuvring. They are invaluable for anyone who wants to start towing from scratch, or whose skills are frankly rusty and need brushing up.

This year's towcar results will be revealed in mid-October. The winners are the ones that towed unflinchingly despite brutal treatment on widely varied terrain, that didn't stumble, stall or overheat the clutch on a steep hillstart, and that

endeared themselves for generally good, safe, efficient behaviour.

They are an elite bunch of cars whose success in the awards will be trumpeted by car manufacturers. There are an estimated 500,000 trailer caravans in Britain, and they all need towcars.

• The Caravan Club, East Grinstead, West Sussex RH19 1UA. Tel 01342 326944

Helen Mound meets Renault's family activity vehicle

Car that wants to come out to play

It was like watching Paul Daniels do his stuff with a magic hat: the Renault PR man kept pulling bicycles, toys and bottles from the new Scenic, demonstrating the car's numerous pockets and hideyholes. The resulting pile of one family's paraphernalia from one Scenic would have been enough to stock a small toyshop.

The new Scenic is the latest in Renault's six-car Megane range, the hatchback and coupé were launched in April this year, the saloon is out next year, the cabriolet the following year and the estate in 1998.

But this is the answer to the prayers of any family driver who never has enough storage space in the car. It's best described as an automotive activity centre, just discovering all the cubbyholes and drink holders is an adventure in itself. If Fisher Price turned its hand to car production this could well be the result.

Renault is looking to create yet another sector in the European market with the Scenic, as it did with the Espace in 1984. But Renault UK marketing director Phil Horton insists that the new car

is not just a miniaturised MPV. "We don't consider the Scenic a niche product to be sold to the adventurous few. A car with so many attributes will not be a niche vehicle, it will appeal to mainstream customers. It's a realistic alternative to a family hatchback."

To get away from the image of miniature-MPV, Renault rather appropriately refers to the Scenic as an "activity car".

Horton argues: "We see this as potentially the biggest change in the UK marketplace since the launch of the hatchback in the 1960s."

That is not the only bold remark that Renault UK is making about the new Scenic either. Despite the fact that the company refuses to talk sales figures or market shares, it sees the activity car as a "volume opportunity" and expects it to be the second best-selling Megane.

One way it claims that it will achieve high sales is with competitive pricing. Horton points out the average price of a car in the UK is £13,200, and the average price of an MPV is a steep £19,200. He says that that the type of motorist that Renault is looking to attract will be reflected in the pricing of the vehicle.

"We're not looking to attract estate car or MPV drivers, we want to convince hatchback drivers this is the car they need."

A top luxury-equipped Scenic is estimated to cost around £15,000.

The customer profile he is aiming for is also bold: "All age-groups, one-car families, singles and couples with and without children." That just about covers everybody.

Renault is the doyen of what is known as "monospace" vehicles; cars with a single



The Scenic, below right, is the latest Megane, and is intended to create its own market

interior space. As well as the highly popular Espace (which is about to show a new face), Renault also sells the diminutive Twingo in France.

And if the new Scenic is creating a whole new market for activity vehicles, the new Espace looks set to take the MPV market to new heights. Unveiled this week at the Paris Motor Show, Renault's new Espace is a highly futuristic-looking vehicle that is scheduled to go on sale in Britain next year.

Renault chairman Louis Schweitzer happily points out that the company is planning

to create and dominate a new market with the Scenic, as it did with the Espace. "Soon, almost every manufacturer will have a mid-range monospace, but for the next two years at least, Scenic will have no rivals in Europe."

The Scenic may look very different car, but anyone who's ever driven an Espace is going to feel at home in a Scenic. The new car has the high seat and right-angled driving position of the original MPV, which can be tiring on the knees and ankles.

Despite concerted attempts to make the Scenic as car-like

as possible, Renault still hasn't achieved the more laid-back, legs-stretched-out driving position most motorists favour. Nevertheless, the pedals are light, the seats supportive, the steering precise and the gearchange reasonably slick, so there's little else to wear the driver out.

Best of all, the Scenic has a more familiar dashboard, having come straight from the Megane hatchback; it doesn't have the vast expanse of plastic that spreads out in front of the driver and front passenger in most MPVs.

The difference between the

Scenic and an ordinary hatchback is its extensive interior space and convenient features such as underfloor storage compartments, interchangeable rear seats; a parcel shelf that can take the weight of a large aquarium; and the mix-and-match coloured seats (although Renault UK is still

deciding whether it is to include those).

In total, its features comprise: 12 pockets, six storage compartments (three of them underfloor), two flight trays on the back of rear seats, six drink holders, and three individual removable rear seats with adjustable legroom.

There are also two bottle holders, a map-reading light and a 120-watt power socket under the rear seats.

The centre rear seat can be turned into a table or replaced with a chill box, and with centre seat removed, the outer rear seats can be moved to allow for more elbow room.

The rear parcel shelf has two height positions, and can also be placed flat on the boot floor.

The difference between the Scenic and an Espace is its smaller exterior dimensions. Renault has virtually maintained the length and width of the Megane hatchback, but increased the height by 18cm.

The Scenic has the headroom and high seat position of an MPV, but it carries five passengers instead of seven, and fits the same parking space as a mid-range car.

Surely all of that adds up to a miniaturised-MPV? But please don't tell Renault UK I said so.

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FEEL UNCOOL



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[†] On the road price includes delivery, number plates, 12 months road fund licence. Car featured has alloy wheels at an extra £870.

BOOKS

Country songs on a squeeze-box

NEW IN PAPERBACK



Questions still unanswered: Lee Harvey Oswald (1963)

Oswald's Tale

By Norman Mailer

Abacus, £12.99

ISBN 0 349 10781 9

WHAT WAS Lee Harvey

Oswald really like? Among all the conspiracy theories around Kennedy's death, scant attention has been paid to the personality of the man accused of firing those high-velocity bullets. Alleged by some to have been part of the CIA, FBI, Mob, KGB, Cuban Intelligence or any other agency you care to mention, there is no conclusive evidence that Lee Harvey Oswald was anything but, in Mailer's phrase, "an overambitious yet henpecked husband, with an unbalanced psyche, a vein of brutality towards his wife, and that was the sad sum of him." Mailer has compiled a

work that is by any standards extraordinary for its tenacity, empathy and imagination. It follows Oswald through the US Marines, his expatriate years under KGB surveillance in Russia, his marriage to Marina in Minsk, his return to America and the confused events leading to his fatal appointment with history on November 22, 1963. The research of this documentary novel is daunting, using interviews with Oswald's family, reports from the Warren report and Lee's own letters to create a portrait of an ambitious and deceitful man. Finally Oswald remains an enigma but that's the way Mailer likes him. Much more than a novel, an epic and penetrating investigation.

PRIMARY COLORS

By Anonymous

Vintage, £6.99

0 09 974361 2

ANONYMOUS is such no more, having recently been ousted as New York columnist Jo Klein. The literary trick that has made him at least \$6 million the richer is over. But this does not mean that Klein's excellent and thinly disguised satire on Bill Clinton's 1992 Presidential campaign should no longer be read. Hilarious characters, witty jargon and a lively pace combine to give the reader a privileged Insider's view of the campaign trail, as the crazed and sordid goings-on are witnessed through the eyes of the candidate's number two.

THE VILLAGE

By David Mamet

Faber £6.99

ISBN 0 571 17313 6

A POLICEMAN rescues a woman who suffers a beating at the hands of her husband. A store owner fears over looming bankruptcy. An old hunter exploits backwoods skills passed down through generations. Gluing these snapshots together, Mamet creates a picture of a New England village from a sum of its parts. This is his first novel and his style reveals a delicate touch as he captures the fractured vernacular and implicit understanding of a rural community with intimate and warm precision.

THE MISSING

By Andrew O'Hagan

Picador, £5.99

WORLDS beyond its lurid and demoralising press coverage, O'Hagan has transformed the disturbing subject of lost children, runaways and the vanished victims of serial sex murderers into an invitation to understand that there is a missing life story, and missing dreams, for every single one who disappears. From Fred West's Gloucester and the street shelters of London to working-class Glasgow and Ayrshire, where his own family story started, he bravely offers us both a social history and a very personal inquiry into human nature. A moving, sympathetic and regenerative book.

MILLENNIUM

A History of Our Last Thousand Years

By Felipe Fernandez-Armesto

Black Swan £14.99

ISBN 0 552 99482 0

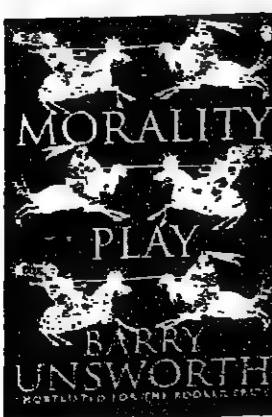
THOUGH sometimes gnostic and often prolix, this is an astonishing book. The author's learning is enormous and his scope immense. He looks not only back, but forwards, and enlivens both with a perspective that refuses to be centred on the West. The result is not only huge history but a cornucopia of the curious. We have kings and queens, but also King Kong; Karl Marx, but also Groucho Marx; and human behaviour as observed amongst the Wolof of the Senegambia. How are we to understand a world in which accountants in Surbiton cook in woks and sleep on futons? Begin with this book.

THE MISSING

By Andrew O'Hagan

Picador, £5.99 ISBN 0 332 34137 5

WORLDS beyond its lurid and demoralising press coverage, O'Hagan has transformed the disturbing subject of lost children, runaways and the vanished victims of serial sex murderers into an invitation to understand that there is a missing life story, and missing dreams, for every single one who disappears. From Fred West's Gloucester and the street shelters of London to working-class Glasgow and Ayrshire, where his own family story started, he bravely offers us both a social history and a very personal inquiry into human nature. A moving, sympathetic and regenerative book.

**MORALITY PLAY**

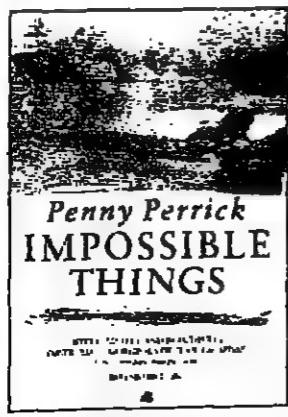
By Barry Unsworth

Penguin, £5.99

ISBN 0 14 107574 1

AN OUTCAST cleric breaches his faith and joins a band of travelling players in late 14th century England. Transgression thus sets the theme of Unsworth's skillfully wrought novel, which has at its heart a Morality Play based not on the Bible, but on a real-life murder. By tempting providence, however, the players discover that neither the murderer nor the world they inhabit is as it seems, as their efforts to unmask the true nature of the murder inadvertently unleash a chain of events and meanings beyond their control. A stark, richly allusive novel pierced by darkness and revelation and penumbra of doubt.

Contributors: Fanny Blake, Ross Leckie, Tom Newton Dunn, Victoria Walker, Alison Burns.

**IMPOSSIBLE THINGS**

By Penny Perrick

Black Swan, £6.99

ISBN 0 552 99693 9

SOCIETY milliner Zanna Gringrich lights up post-war London. Others are dowdy. She is Dior. She embarks on a passionate love affair with a politician and through him she becomes deeply embroiled in the affairs of a decaying stately pile owned by her lover's misanthropic brother. This novel romps zestfully along. Zanna has sex with a stranger on the floor of Elizabeth Taylor's lavish suite in the New York Plaza Hotel. At first her business thrives, then sadly fades. She loses her lover, but finds his heart in the end. Does Penny Perrick expect us to believe all this? No, but like us she has enjoyed a scented passage.

IN Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, Nick Carraway, the narrator, reflects on the wonder of "the fresh, green breast of the new world" with which the first immigrants were presented. Less lyrical, but not a whit less eloquent, in her vigorous, salty and extraordinary novel *Annie Proulx*, whose *Shipping News* was a surprise bestseller, takes us into the beating heart of an infant nation: and a raw, dangerous, wild place it is too.

Furthermore, in employing a narrative device — tracing the passage over 100 years of an accordion brought by a Sicilian to "La Merica" in the 1870s — frequently found in popular novels, she achieves a marriage between the clever tricks of the former and the necessary esoterism of a writer intent on her vision and a sound "hoarse and crying, reminding listeners of the brutalities of love, of various hungers", the accordion fetches up in New Orleans, out on the Midwest prairies where Germans have settled. In Cajun bayous, downtown Chicago, in Texas and Mississippi, it is heard in homes, nightclubs, in the streets and in cellars and on it are played

polkas and folksong, jazz, country dance and complaint.

Increasingly hattered, its apparently haphazard progress from south to north to west is marked by a series of violent events and sudden death, by poverty, disappointment, illness and gruelling labour — the crimes of the title. Of course, this random element is artifice, for the author is drawing a map of a growing country and

pining down a moment of metamorphosis. "His name taken from him, the language lost, his religion changed, the past unknown, the person he had been... erased": this is the fate of the immigrant, a tragedy which is actively sought, for in the slaying of identity lies rebirth.

Tapping into the epic narrative tradition, which serves as a guardian and a vehicle for the collective memory, Proulx fuses history with the novel. Fictionalising the people whose lives were unknown, more important unimagined, she outwits the traditional dualism in American literature — the "grievance and daydream" of a South obsessed by the past slogging it out with the so-called morally and commercially energetic North — to create a crowded canvas which, in its thrust and its choice of character and in its grand mix of music, epic and incident, is truly democratic.

It requires nerve to keep the pen steady, particularly as she has discarded the safety net of focusing on one set of characters, but she pulls it off. The detail is breathtaking, her ear for dialogue matchless, her observation unsentimental, her pace infectious. She tackles death, sex and the gruesome with black hilarity and the skills of a born storyteller. Rich and dense, *Accordion Crimes* is a splendid novel.

A tailor tinkers in Greeneland

John le Carré's blackly comic novel visits Graham Greene's Caribbean stamping grounds, Peter Millar says

ONE thing in particular makes John le Carré different from every other writer of popular fiction: chutzpah. If Messrs Clancy, Forsyth, Archer et al people their two-dimensional worlds with cardboard cut-outs, only two pages into the average le Carré already we are bumping into objects, artefacts, anecdotes and cameo characters skulking in the wings, forcing us to give them house room in our imagination: remember the pilfering, cashed prep-school master in *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* or Herr Kaspar, the wig-wearing head concierge in *The*

THE TAILOR OF PANAMA

By John le Carré

Hodder & Stoughton, £16.99

ISBN 0 340 68482 X

Alone among espionage writers, le Carré has survived the end of the Cold War without detriment to his fiction, chiefly because he was never really writing about espionage at all. His characters lived because they, rather than what happened to them, were his true subject. The plot in this book, which in the end is almost incidental, is based on the premise that if Panama were to become America's Suez, a Tory government would never do to them what they did to us.

It is not a polemical book — the master would never stoop so low — but it is a political one. It is hard to imagine its author voting Conservative. It makes assumptions about causal corruption having become endemic in Britain, moulded only by clinical self-serving cynicism: the stereotypical vices of Central American societies revealed as ours rather than theirs.

With the 1999 deadline for America to hand over the Panama Canal fast approaching, the bright young hope of

Night Manager. Men of no importance but so rounded in themselves that we have to squeeze past them to follow the plot.

So already on page one of *The Tailor of Panama* lurks Arthur Braithwaite, former senior partner in the firm of Pendle and Braithwaite Co Limited, "Tailors to Royalty", formerly of Savile Row and presently of the Via España, or just off it, a man who is to Harry Pendle the totem of everything he stands for: in short, a legend. For this is a book about legends and lies, about great loves and little betrayals, about the myth of truth and the consequences of deception. As such it is a work of rare brilliance.

This is a leap for le Carré that almost takes him out of the genre altogether. But wisely not quite. When it comes to the crunch, helicopters of war hovering overhead are far too useful a device to abandon.

A FIRST novel of style, wit and confidence from a writer pushing 50, previously known only for beside anthologies of light-hearted trivia, must surely be accounted an event. When that writer is the Conservative MP for a marginal seat, the reader may gibbily suspect him of seeking a new day-job — but is forced to conclude, in this instance, that politics' potential loss could be popular literature's gain.

Amid the fast-swelling ranks of politician-novelists, Gyles Brandreth has a lot more going for him than Edwin Currie, even Douglas Hurd, certainly Jeffrey Archer. Not merely like all the best after-dinner speakers, does he know how to spin a yarn; unlike most politicians,

he has a touching access to the secrets of the human heart. Never one to funk a challenge, Brandreth chooses to make his fictional debut in the female first person, risking the votes of the blue-riband brigade on the very first page by admiring a male nude emerging from a shower. The subsequent psycho-search for the

WHO IS NICK SAINT?

By Gyles Brandreth

Little Brown, £14.99

ISBN 0 316 87979 7

true identity of Nick Saint — a paragon among men, apart from the fact that he believes himself to be Santa Claus — could never be called faint-hearted.

After an epigraph from Goethe, Brandreth quotes liberally from Jung, Freud, Robert Frost, C. S. Lewis, William Morris and James Baldwin, *inter alia*.

Brandreth's tale is set in an America whose natives speak true-blue Anglo-Saxon — at times very blue — but whose urban landscape he evokes in

However you define rock bottom, this woman has been there.

So how did she get out? She is too honest to offer one solution: there were a series of treatment centres, the gentle affection of nuns, the death of her long-time lover and a pot-pourri of 1990s solutions, ranging from feminism to acupuncture and Clannad music. But I left the book convinced that Kitch returned to society because somewhere in her innermost core was an innate Yorkshire toughness and self-respect. Her greatest joy is the respect of others. It is impossible to withhold it.

LIBBY PURVES

Fanfare from a Commons man

PAVEMENT FOR MY PILLOW

By Chris Kitch

Orion, £16.99

ISBN 0 7528 0340 9

ly at grammar school and got a sense of self-worth in the Girl Guides. Expelled, she embarked in rapid succession on a baby, a prison sentence, another baby, prostitution and more prison. Emerging, she had a third baby after a rape; having lost all three into care, she took to drugs, gay love affairs, a period in a schizophrenic ward, rape by a legless vagrant who took her for a boy, and yelling on Piccadilly. In one treatment centre she was even beaten by Princess Diana.

Today she is a postgraduate student, writer, lecturer and television pundit. This is her story, sparingly told, of the long road down and the hard slog up. Born illegitimate in Bradford, she was sexually abused, taunted by boys, tormented by burgeoning lesbianism, told by blind old mother that, as a bastard, she was not welcome to her place in the family grave.

On the other hand, she read voraciously

some style, from New York's notorious Chelsea Hotel to a racket school for drop-outs in the not-so-deep South, staffed by a beguiling rogues' gallery of variously broken eccentrics. Nor does his gentle foray into the realms of "magic realism" mind his long words, sending the reader to the Scrabble dictionary with such challenges as concinity, pre-adamite, enculturation, echolalia, heterocrite and devial.

If Nick Saint is "Peter Pan with the prowess of Tarzan and the wisdom of Solomon", Brandreth has also for years been a little boy who never grew up, but may finally have done so with this feelgood fantasia.

ANTHONY HOLDEN

When even Punch was funny

A GENTLEMAN PUBLISHER'S COMMONPLACE BOOK

By John G. Murray, edited by

John R. Murray

Murray, £9.95

ISBN 0 7195 5623 6

JOHN G. — or "Jock" — Murray ran the publishing house of John Murray until his death in 1993. Whether he was more of a gentleman than other publishers can be left to them to decide. He was certainly an amusing and courteous man, as well as a great dandy. Moreover, the "gentleman" reference here is really a light-hearted allusion to a remark made long ago:

"When *Childe Harold* was published, Byron woke up to find himself famous and his publisher, John Murray, woke up a gentleman." Murray's have been around a long time.

Jock was well-known for keeping a commonplace book. He would copy into it funny things he had read, and the circle of his authors who used to sit around with him in the famous offices in Albemarle Street would tell him things they had heard or send him pictures. John G. Murray, his son, has compiled this selection from it. The frontispiece is a drawing by Jock's great

friend, Osbert Lancaster, showing a modern Byron kneeling by a girl, with the caption: "Maid of Athens, 'ere we part. Give, O give me back my heart, For altho' it's yours tonight Murray's have been."

copyright. That catches the tone of many of the entries. Playful whimsy is the prevailing note. Occasionally something breaks through, such as Voltaire's remark when advised to renounce the devil on his deathbed. "Now is not

DERWENT MAY

VISITING A GALLERY?**A NIGHT AT THE OPERA?****GOING OUT?**

Pages 16, 17

NEW AUTHORS

ALL OUR NEW WORK

GOING OUT



London: a chance to enjoy the storytelling (for all ages) and the literary activities which are taking place all day today as part of Children's Book Week

CHILDREN

LONDON
Children's Book Week
All-day literary activities and
storytelling for children of all
ages.
Voice Box, Festival Hall,
South Bank, SE1 (0171-960
4242). Today, phone for details;
£2.50.

The Lazy Daisy Show
Circus acts, magic and
audience participation. For three-
year-olds and above.

Jackson's Lane Community
Centre,
Archway Road, N6 (0181-341
4421). Today, 11am and 2pm; £3.

The Last Rainforest
The excellent Jactio Visual
Theatre presents a series of
rainforest adventures. For
four-year-olds and above.
Tricycle Theatre,
Kilburn High Road, NW6
(0171-328 1000). Today, 11.30am
and 2pm; £3, concs £2.

Pollo and the Star Fairies
Puppet fun with the innovative

Nomad Puppet company.
Nomad Studios,
Upper Tooting Road, SW17
(0181-767 4005). Tomorrow,
11.30am and 2pm; £2.50.

Under My Sink
Peer under the sink and find
out what lurks there in this
puppet performance.
Polkie Theatre for Children,
The Broadway, SW19 (0181-543
4688). Today, 12.30pm and
2.30pm; £4.

Zippo's Circus
New circus entertainment

featuring some fine horse acts.
Peckham Rye Park,
Peckham Rye, SE1 (0171-811
811). Today, 2.30pm, 5pm and
7.30pm, tomorrow, 11am and
2.30pm; £3.50-£8.50.

HIGH WYCOMBE
The Witches
Roald Dahl's tale is adapted
for the stage.
Wycombe Swan,
St Mary Street (01494 512000).
Today, 11am, 2pm and 7pm;
£7.50-£10.50.

BIRMINGHAM
Railway Exhibition
Model railway show for
family and general enthusiasts.
National Exhibition Centre,
(0121-780 4133). Today, 10am-
7pm, tomorrow, 10am-5pm; £6.
two-day ticket £9

HIGH WYCOMBE
The Witches
Roald Dahl's tale is adapted
for the stage.
Wycombe Swan,
St Mary Street (01494 512000).
Today, 11am, 2pm and 7pm;
£7.50-£10.50.

NEWCASTLE
Children's Gallery
Collection of toys, games and
art for the under-fives.
Laing Art Gallery,
Highgate Place (0191-232 7734).
Today, 10am-5pm, tomorrow,
2-5pm; free.

JAZZ

LONDON
Freddy Cole Trio
Nat King Cole's little
brother sings and plays.
Cafe Royal,
Regent Street, W1 (0171-437
9090). Tonight, 8pm; £25.

Blossom Dearie
Squeaky-voiced,
diminutive American
chanteuse.
University College School
Theatre,
Frogal, NW3 (0171-435
2215). Tomorrow, 7.45pm; £8.

Dennis Rollins's Dee Rose
Jazz, ska and funk
trombonist leads this octet.
Jazz Cafe,
Parkway, NW1 (0171-344
0044). Tonight, 7pm; £9.

Georgie Fame, Dale
Barlow
Soul-jazz organ legend,
moving into mainstream.
Ronnie Scott's,
Frith Street, W1 (0171-439
0747). Tonight, 9pm; £15.

Clyde Stubblefield
James Brown's iconic and
much-sampled Funky
Drummer continues his
gigs and workshops.

12 Bar Club,
Denmark Street, WC2
(0171-916 6999). Tonight,
tomorrow, 8pm; £10.

CRITIC'S CHOICE

HARRY ALLEN AND
MICHAEL HASHIM
Call them young fogies, if you
wish, but American saxo-
phonists Harry Allen and
Michael Hashim make a
compelling double-act. Allen,
a mellow tenor player in the
Ben Webster mould explores
the ballad tradition on his
new album, *Blue Skies*, while
Hashim takes the vintage
sound of Johnny Hodges and
other swing giants and adds a
dash of showmanship.
CLIVE DAVIS

Soho Jazz Festival,
Pizza Express, Dean
Street, W1 (0171-439 8722)
tonight, 9pm; £15.

Mike and Kate
Westbrook, Ed Jones
Quintet, Ascension

Soho Jazz Festival triple
bill: banjoist, pianist and
composer Mike Westbrook
duets with torch-singer wife
Kate, plus saxophonist Ed
Jones and Steve Plevs's
freestyle orchestra.

Ronnie Scott's,
Frith Street, W1 (0171-439
0747). Tomorrow, 8pm; £8.

REGIONAL

BIRMINGHAM
Tin Garland Quartet
Barnstorming multi-
reedist, with drummer
Winston Clifford, guitarist
Phil Robson and bassist
Laurence Cottle.

The Custard Factory,
Gibbs Street (0121-604
7777). Tonight, 8pm; £5.

BRIGHTON
Martin Taylor's Spirit of
Django

Gypsy jazz guitarist
features saxist Dave
O'Higgins and
accordionist Jack Emblow.

Sally Benney Theatre,
University of Brighton,
Grand Parade (01273 709709).
Tomorrow, 8pm; £9.

NEWCASTLE
Helen Watson
Folk and blues-edged diva.
Live Theatre,
Broad Chare, Quayside
(0191-232 1232). Tonight, 8pm;
£5-£6.

ST ALBANS
Ray Gaskins
Soul-jazz saxophonist.
Red Note at Maltings Arts
Centre,
The Maltings (01727
44222). Tonight, 8.30pm; £7.

WELWYN GARDEN CITY

Ray Gelato and Alex
Garnett's Tough Tenors
Beefy tenor pairing with
pianist Richard Busiakiewicz.

Fairway Suite,
Old Herns Lane (01488
77979). Tomorrow, 8pm; £5.
mems £4.

OPERA

London: Rosa Mannion

■ LONDON
Don Giovanni
Sir Georg Solti conducts
the London Philharmonic
Orchestra in a concert
performance of Mozart.

Festival Hall,
South Bank Centre, SE1
(0171-960 4242). Tonight, 7pm;
£7-£40.

La Traviata
New English National
Opera production, with Rosa
Mannion as Violetta,
directed by Jonathan Miller.

London Coliseum,
St Martin's Lane, WC2
(0171-632 8300). Tonight,
6.30pm; £6.50-£55.

Die Walküre
Richard Jones's
production, featuring John
Tomlinson as Wotan.

Royal Opera House,
Covent Garden, WC2
(0171-304 4000). Today, 4pm;
£7-£14.50.

REGIONAL

LEEDS
Iphigenia in Aulis
An English sung version
of Gluck's opera in a new
production.

Grand Theatre,
New Briggate (0113-245
9251). Tonight, 7.15pm;
£7.50-£8.

CRITIC'S CHOICE

THE DOCTOR OF
MYDDFAI

Peter Maxwell Davies's new
opera was commissioned by
the Welsh National, success-

fully premiered in the sum-
mer and now joins the
company's autumn repertory.

Dealing in part with a
mysterious disease and a heartless
European bureaucracy, it
shows that the corrupting
nature of power never goes

away. There is plenty for the
WNO Chorus to do, starring
roles for Paul Whelan as the
Doctor and Gwynne Howell

as the Euro-Ruler, and the
opera is short, sharp and
crisply directed by its libret-

ist, David Pountney. Richard

Armstrong is the conductor.

RODNEY MILNES

New Theatre,

Park Place, Cardiff (01222
878889). Today, 7.15pm;
£8-£15.

DANCE

■ LONDON
Adventures in Motion
Pictures: *Swan Lake*

Olivier Award-winning
production of Tchaikovsky's

ballet choreographed by
Matthew Bourne and
featuring the acclaimed
all-male corps of swans.

Piccadilly Theatre,
Denman Street, W1 (0171-
369 1734). Today, 2.30pm
(Kemp/Wright/Mortimer)
and 7.30pm (Cooper/Ambler/
Chadwick); £9.50-£30.

Circles in Time

Jak Ahuvalia
choreographs this innovative
work with jazz music from
Julian Nicholas.

Jackson's Lane
Community Centre,
Archway Road, N6 (0181-
341 4421). Tonight, 8pm; £6.

CRITIC'S CHOICE

RICHARD ALSTON

DANCE COMPANY

Earlier this year Richard
Alston choreographed to Har-
rison Birtwistle. Now, as part
of the Dance Umbrella festi-
val, his Dance Company pres-
ents the world premiere of his
Okho, piece for five male
dancers set to Iannis Xenakis's
score for djembes — large
African drums played live
live on stage. The rest of the
programme features Dar-
shan Singh Bhuller in *Or-
pheus Singing and Dream-
ing* to Birtwistle's score.

DEBRA CRAYNE

Queen Elizabeth Hall,

South Bank Centre, SE1

(0171-960 4242). Tonight,

tomorrow, 7.45pm; £10-

E14, concs £6-£12.

SUNDERLAND

Birmingham Royal

Ballet: Swan Lake

Peter Wright and Galina

Samsova's production.

Empire Theatre,

High Street, West (0191-514
2517). Today, 2.30pm and
7.30pm; £10.

POP

■ LONDON
Fernest Arzouman and the

Thunders

Louisian creole zydeco

star on his first visit to Britain

for 15 years.

100 Club,

Oxford Street, W1 (0171-636
0933). Tomorrow, 7.30pm; £6.

BIFFY CLYRO

Biffy Clyro

Abba imitators with their

own cult following.

Lewisohn Theatre,

Rushley Green, SE8 (0181-
690 0002). Tonight, 8pm;
£10.50-£12.50.

DAVID SINCLAIR

Fleeces & Finkin

St Thomas Street, Bristol
(0117-927 7150). Tonight, 8pm;
£7.

Astoria

Charing Cross Road,

London WC2 (0171-434 0403).

Tonight, 8pm; £8.

LEICESTER

The Bluetones

Geneva

Brit-pop guitar band, with

support from Scottish

newcomers Geneva.

De Montfort Hall,

Granville Road (0116-233
3111). Tonight, 7.30pm; £8.50.

NORWICH

Ocean Colour Scene

Sixties-style British R & B-

influenced rockers adopted by

Paul Weller.

University of

GOING OUT

GALLERIES

CRITICS CHOICE

EVELYN DE MORGAN
Evelyn De Morgan died in 1916, but lived long enough to see her late Pre-Raphaelite style of visionary art go out of fashion. Recently her work has turned up in a number of exhibitions, such as *The Last Romantics at the Barbican* in 1989. She was born in 1855, studied at the Slade, and married the potter and decorative artist William De Morgan. The De Morgans became involved with spiritualism and psychic communication, and much of her art reflects this and was strongly influenced by Burne-Jones. The two exhibitions of the drawings and the paintings show she was a brilliant draughtsman, an exquisite colourist, and had a personal vision which survives the vicissitudes of fashion.

JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR
Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum, East Cliff, Bournemouth (01202 471800). Today and tomorrow, 10am-5pm; free.

■ LONDON

Blumenfeld: A Fetish for Beauty

Retrospective of the photographer's classic fashion, portraiture and nude images. *Barbican Art Gallery*, Silk Street, EC2 (0171-638 4141). Today, 10am-6.45pm, tomorrow, midday-6.45pm; £4.50 (includes entry to Jam).

Antony Gormley: Field for the British Isles

Installation comprising 40,000 individually crafted terracotta figures in a room. *Hardway Gallery*, Belvedere Road, SE1 (0171-960 4242). Today, tomorrow, 10am-6pm; £3.



Edinburgh: *St Thomas* by Diego Velázquez, on display at the National Gallery of Scotland

JAM
Multi-media exhibition exploring culture and music. *Barbican Art Gallery*, Silk Street, EC2 (0171-638 4141). Today, 10am-6.45pm, tomorrow, midday-6.45pm; £4.50.

BP Portrait Award
Annual open submission portrait show. *National Portrait Gallery*, St Martin's Place, WC2 (0171-306 0055). Today, 10am-6pm, tomorrow, midday-6pm; free.

■ REGIONAL
BIRMINGHAM
Eve Arnold: In Retrospect Four decades of the acclaimed Magnum photjournalist's life and work. *Ikon Gallery*, Queen Victoria Square (01482 610610). Today, 10am-5pm, tomorrow, 1.30-4.30pm; free.

John Bright Street (0121-643 0708). Today, 10am-5pm; free.

COVENTRY
The Director's Eye European film-makers, their drawings and photographs. *Mead Gallery*, Arts Centre, University of Warwick, (01203 523523 ext 2590). Today, 10am-5pm; free.

DURHAM
Bill Viola
Site-specific installation from the master of the video spectacle. *Durham Cathedral*, Palace Green (0191-384 3720/386 4266). Today, tomorrow, phone for times; free.

EDINBURGH
Vélezquez in Seville
Series of paintings from Vélezquez's formative years. *National Gallery of Scotland*, The Mound (0131-556 8921). Today, 10am-5pm, Sun, 2-5pm; £4, concs £2.50.

HULL
David Mach
New installation made from newspapers. *Ferens Art Gallery*, Queen Victoria Square (01482 610610). Today, 10am-5pm, tomorrow, 1.30-4.30pm; free.

MIDDLESBROUGH
Marina Abramovic
New site-specific work from the acclaimed artist. *Middlesbrough Art Gallery*, Linthorpe Road (01642 247445). Today, 10am-6pm; free.

OXFORD
Ruskin and Oxford
Appraisal of the artist and art critic's work. *Ashmolean Museum*, Beaumont Street (01865 278000). Today, 10am-4pm, tomorrow, 2-4pm; free.

COMING SOON

■ LONDON
From Oct 16
In the Company of Men
The RSC launches its London season in the Barbican Pit with the British premiere of Edward Bond's contemporary drama. Box office: 0171-636 8891.

Dec 17-Jan 4
The Kirov Ballet
The company presents *The Nutcracker* for a season at the London Coliseum. Box office: 0171-632 8300.

Jan 9-10
Snowshow
The Russian clown Slava Polunin brings his Edinburgh Fringe hit to London's Peacock Theatre (formerly the Royal Lyceum). Prior to London it will tour to Dublin, High Wycombe, Halifax, Barnstaple, Oxford, Liverpool, Belfast, Dartford and Crawley. London box office: 0171-314 8800.



On tour: Slava Polunin, the clown, will present *Snowshow*

■ REGIONAL
BIRMINGHAM
Oct 8-9
Les Danaides
Silvia Purcarate's epic production of Aeschylus's tragedy plays two performances only at the National Indoor Arena. Box office: 0121-236 4450.

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON
From Nov 21
Much Ado About Nothing
The RSC launches its Stratford season with a new production, starring Alex Jennings as Benedick, Slobhan Redmond as Beatrice. Box office: 01789 295623.

TOURING

Oct 12-19

David Murray USA/UK Big Band

The tenor saxophonist tours to Liverpool (Bluecoat Arts Centre, Oct 12-13, 0151-709 5297), London (Queen Elizabeth Hall, Oct 14, 0171-960 4242), Brighton (Sallis Berney Theatre, Oct 15, 01273 709709), Exeter (St George's Hall, Oct 16, 0192 421111), Manchester (Nia Centre, Oct 17, 0161-227 0254), Southampton (Turner Sims Hall, 01703 951511) and Birmingham (Adrian Boult Hall, 0121-236 5623).

FAIRS

■ LONDON

Belly Dancing: Masterclass

Maria Louisa from Carlton TV flexes her muscles in the classroom. *Albany Theatre*, Douglas Way, SE8 (0181-692 4446). Today, 3.15-5.45pm; £8, concs £5 (per class).

Heritage Antiques Fair

Jewellery, prints, paintings, ceramics and more on display. *London Hilton Hotel*, Park Lane, W1 (0171-493 8000). Tomorrow, 11am-5pm; £1, child free.

Horse of the Year Show

Horse play featuring the Cadre Noir of Saumur. Wembley Arena, Empire Way, HA9 (0181-900 1234). Today, tomorrow; phone for details.

■ REGIONAL

BEACONSFIELD

20th Wooburn Arts Festival Concerts, exhibitions, theatre and children's events. *Wooburn Arts Festival Information*, Various venues (01628 524243). Today, tomorrow; phone for details.

GUILDFORD

29th Surrey Antiques Fair Antiques and collectables. *Civic Hall*, (01483 422862). Today, ends tomorrow, 11am-7pm; £3-£4.

LIVERPOOL

Visionfest Annual visual arts and design fair.

Merseyside Tourism and Conference Centre, Atlantic Pavilion (0151-709 2444). Today, tomorrow; phone for details.

MANCHESTER
Festival
Comedy, music, club culture and digital art. *Manchester Festival Information*, Various venues (0161-236 7592). Today, ends tomorrow; phone for details.

NORTHAMPTON
DoF Fair
Doll mania with toys and miniatures for sale. *Tempo Hall*, (01604 660272). Tomorrow, 10.30am-4.30pm; £2.50, concs £1.20, child free.

SWANSEA
Swansea Celtic Festival
Traditional crafts, folk and sports events. Various venues (01792 636960). From tomorrow; phone for details.

WINDSOR
Windsor Festival
The music fest ends today. *Windsor Festival Information*, Various venues (01753 623400). Times vary; phone for details.

FILM

Films in London and (where indicated with the symbol *) on release across the country

■ NEW RELEASES

♦ COURAGE UNDER FIRE (15)

Denzel Washington searches for truth in the Gulf War. Half-way intelligent drama, with Meg Ryan. *Odeon: Kensington* (01426 914666) *Swiss Cottage* (01426 914098) *Ritz* (0171-737 2121) *UCI Whitley* (0171-889900) *MGM Baker Street* (0171-935 9772) *Ritz* (0171-737 2121) *UCI* *Whiteleys* (0171-889900) *Virgin Fulham Road* (0171-370 2636) *Trocadero* (0171-434 0031)

TOUCH OF EVIL (12)
Revival of Orson Welles's flamboyant thriller from 1958 about murky happenings on the Mexican border. With Charlton Heston, Welles himself, Jane Leigh and Marlene Dietrich. *Lumiere* (0171-836 0691)

CRITIC'S CHOICE

JUDE (15)

Neither Hardy's novel nor the film's director, Michael Winterbottom, are cut out for making pretty pictures, and this is a tale about dashed hopes and illicit love. But visually much is remarkable.

Christopher Eccleston acts in earnest, and Kate Winslet gives a mesmerising performance as Sue, the stonecutter's vivacious cousin, turned wan by the kicks of fate.

GEOFF BROWN

ABC Tottenham Court Road (0171-636 6149)

ABC *Tottenham Court Road* (0171-636 6149) *Barbican Cinema* (0171-638 8891) *Gate Notting Hill* (0171-727 4043) *Odeon Haymarket* (01426 915 353) *Odeon Kensington* (01426 914 666) *Odeon Swiss Cottage* (0171-586 3057)

CINEMA

BLOOD SIMPLE (18)

Welcome revival of the Coen brothers' debut feature, made in 1983; a film noir homage made with cold-blooded verve. With John Getz and Francis McDormand.

MGM Piccadilly (0171-437 3561) *Watermans* (0181-568 1176)

FARGO (18)

A kidnapping goes haywire in the Midwest.

Wonderful, humane crime thriller from Joel and Ethan Coen, with Frances McDormand and William H. Macy.

ABC Panton Street (0171-930 0631) *Plaza* (0990 889900)

DON'T MISS

■ THE WARLEY NATIONAL MODEL RAILWAY EXHIBITION

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■ DAWN FRENCH AND LEO MCKERN IN J B PRIESTLEY'S WHEN WE ARE MARRIED. SEE THEATRE

■ CINEMA

JANE EYRE (PG)

Decent but bloodless

adaptation of the novel, with Charlotte Gainsbourg and William Hurt. Director, Franco Zeffirelli.

Barbican (0171-638 8891)

Notting Hill Coronet (0171-727 6705) *Richmond* (0181-332 0030) *Ritz* (0171-737 2121)

Screen/Hill (0171-437 3366) *Virgins: Fulham Road* (0171-370 2636) *Haymarket* (0171-833 1527) *Warren West End* (0171-437 4343)

■ STEALING BEAUTY (15)

Enjoyable Bertolucci about an American teenager's sexual flowering in

Tuscany. With Liv Tyler.

ABC Shaftesbury Avenue (0171-836 6279) *Metro* (0171-437 0757) *Odeon Kensington* (01426 914666) *Virgin Chelsea* (0171-352 5056)

THEATRE

■ LONDON

Laughter on the 23rd Floor

Neil Simon's very funny

account of working among a team of scriptwriters for

comedian Sid Caesar back in

the 1950s, fighting against

time and philistine producers.

Gene Wilder plays Sid.

Directed by Roger Haines,

responsible for last year's

Manchester production.

Queen's,

Shaftesbury Avenue, W1

0171-494 5040. Tonight, 8pm; mat, 4pm.

St Paul's Cathedral, St Paul's Churchyard, EC4 (0171-230 4289).

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BISHOP OF LONDON: The Right Rev Richard Chartres

ARCHITECTURE: Discovery of Inigo Jones' portico beneath West Front of Westminster Abbey

SERMON: Bishop Charles warned that Anglicans must not disappear "into the comfortable invisibility of some privatised, individualistic salvation cult". ★★★★

LITURGY: An effective combination of ancient and modern in the language

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International skiing: In a new series, starting with France, our expert Doug Sager gives a round-up....

Resorts get their skis on for winter

THE MESSAGE from tour operators is: "Do not wait for late-booking offers this winter." With brochures launched earlier than ever, tour operators say they are confident of selling 90 per cent of their holidays at full brochure prices.

After a disastrous snow year in 1995-96 across most of the Alps — Italy and southern France being the exceptions — skiing seems on the upswing, fuelled by burgeoning enthusiasm for snowboarding and by the new "miracle" carving skis, which promise to make every beginner an overnight expert.

Skiing holidays are currency driven, which explains the huge popularity of Italy and Canada over the past two seasons. Both countries are again in great demand, the best accommodation in Italy already fully booked in some cases. But

this autumn, at the time many holidays are chosen, sterling has improved or held steady compared to each of the skiing currencies except the Italian lira, which has fallen about 6 per cent. And all 15 of Italy's top resorts have this winter raised their ski pass prices.

Bookings to Austria show few signs of growth, despite improvement in the exchange rate. But Switzerland, especially in Verbier and Zermatt, is making a comeback, now that sterling has climbed about 8 per cent against the Swiss franc, and only two out of the top 15 Swiss resorts have raised ski pass prices.

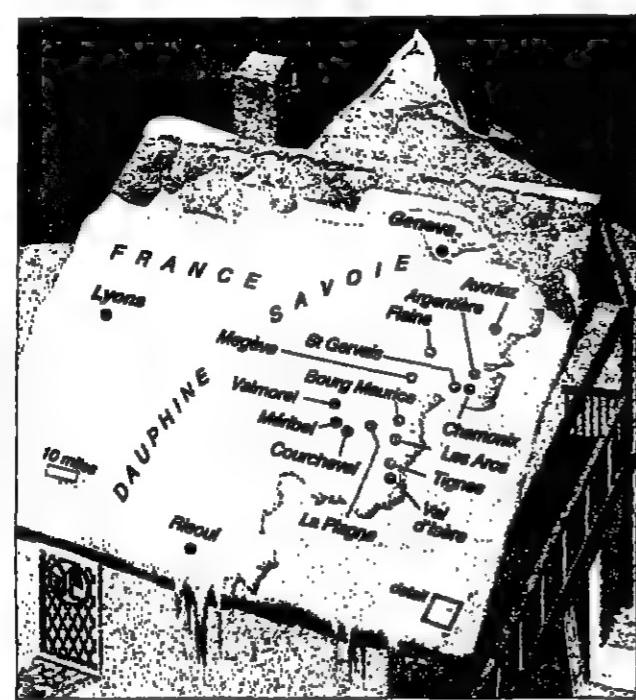
Travel agents report a growing trend, too, towards America. Skiers who have tried Canada find resorts in California and Colorado offer more scope for skiing, better nightlife and warmer weather.

The French ski the way they buy wine, by *pays*. It's unheard of to find a Frenchman skiing in Austria, for example. And French skiers remain as aloof to the lure of North American skiing — the hottest growth area for British skiers — as they do to the delights of British *biftek*.

Even within France the French ski by *département*. Parisians slot into Courchevel *arrondissement* by *arrondissement*. Last winter it was the most southerly resort — particularly Isola 2000, within a snowball's toss of the Mediterranean, which had some of the best snow in the Alps. But few French skiers living north of Grenoble were moved to explore south of Les Deux Alpes.

British skiers are, by comparison, adventurers. There is no French resort from the Pyrenees to the Jura where British accents are unheard. Discounting the drinking resorts — Sol in Austria and Sauze d'Oulx in Italy — the snowfields of France continue to dominate the top of the popularity charts with every class of British skier.

With the advent of Le Shuttle and cut-price ferry crossings, even budget travellers can now do better in France than in Eastern Europe, especially if one considers quality of snow and savings on unlimited quantities of duty-free goods. Indeed, last winter a number of coaches from Poland and the Czech Republic appeared in Risoul and Valmorel.



Megève's sunny skiing in forested glades, complemented by an attractive, cobbled town centre and horse-drawn sleighs, are at a price to a clientele older and less obviously *nouveau riche* than found in Courchevel

Nobody actually counts independent travellers, and estimates range from 25 to 50 per cent of the overall ceiling of about 700,000 winter holiday-makers. But in every tour operator's top ten, French resorts vastly outnumber those from any other nation.

There are indications, however, this mass popularity may not endure forever. Britons have become habituated to France, through summer holidays and second homes. They are horrified by Swiss prices and still hesitant to cross the Atlantic for six days' skiing.

But aside from familiarity, French skiing faces an uphill battle in the medium-term future.

French resorts are not the easiest to access. From Geneva or Zurich airports, with their railway stations built into the air terminals, many Swiss resorts are far quicker and more convenient to get to than the Tarentaise. Austrian pensions offer more commodious accommodation than French flats — the pokiest per square metre in the Alps — and any Austrian village is cosier than a French concrete complex.



Courchevel is unquestionably more expensive than Verbier or St Anton and arguably dearer than Aspen or Zermatt. Italy's ski lifts and snowmaking are more up to date overall than the French standard. Even the Swiss can be more welcoming than the French, with their patented sniffs, sneers and "Je m'en fous" shrugs, and the entire country is virtually a no-go area for adult skiers during February, when prices skyrocket and province after province of French schoolchildren are let loose on the pistes.

If there is one unarguable appeal of French skiing it is the intermediate interlinked skipass regions, skiing paradises for recreational connoisseurs of the immaculately groomed piste. Never mind that Italy's Dolomiti Superski and Austria's Top Taurin are hundreds of kilometres bigger than the Trois Vallées in France. Regardless of price or ultimate expanse of skiing terrain, the Trois Vallées and the Espace Killy are home to the greatest number of British chalet operators in the Alps. And Val d'Isère and Courchevel continue unrivalled in British tastings as the *grand cru* resorts of the Alps.

What Chamonix is not is perfectly, cute or cosy. Lift stations for the outlying, easy-skiing sectors of Flégère, Tour and Houches require personal transport, or more patience than can reasonably be expected if the bus system, which shuts down at 7pm, is tried. Many tour operators consequently include a van, and even mountain guide, as a package option.

Argentière's Grands Montets cable cars raise skiing possibilities from legendary off-piste, runs such as the Pas de Chèvre for which a guide is essential, to good, steep red and black pistes in a scenic wonderland of crevasses. The village is compact and congenial — off the main street, which must be one of the ugliest in the Alps.

Megève's cobbled centre and horse-drawn sleighs are complemented by sunny skiing in forested glades, attractive at a price to a clientele older and less obviously *nouveau riche* than that found in Courchevel.

St Gervais has the faded glamour of an old spa and the quaintness of a cog railway line to Chamonix via Les Houches, making for a relatively inexpensive and less intense alternative to Argentière or Chamonix.

Trois Vallées, Espace Killy, are remarkably efficient and free of queues.

All through the night Courchevel's snow-grooming machines growl and about 550

snow cannons spurt out the white stuff to make the rolling, wide and well-marked pistes

which are the envy of the Alps. Courchevel flatters beginners and fatigues intermediates with both the ease and the expanse of its skiing. No French resort has more characteristic chalets, or more luxurious hotels. Despite the high level of accommodation, at commensurate prices, and a glut of good restaurants, the

village architecture inspires little admiration or affection.

An advantage in Courchevel, however, is that many chalets

are close to the slopes, and the streets are more filled with snow than traffic. The quintessential French resort, Courchevel admits that almost 30 per cent of its clientele is British.

Méribel, founded by a Briton, is the most central resort for skiing the Trois Vallées, and has the most chalets, as well as possibly the most

British skiers per square metre of piste in the Alps. It is, unfortunately, not so inexpensive as it once was, but is still a refuge from chic-shock.

Courchevel, Méribel, Mottez, Val d'Isère, Tignes,

Inaccurately claiming to be the world's biggest skiing domain, the area ranks fifth after Italy's Dolomiti Superski, Austria's Top Taurin and the Portes du Soleil and Mont Blanc regions of France; the Trois Vallées certainly is the best connected. The Espace Killy, shared by Tignes and Val d'Isère, doesn't come close to making the top ten of the largest skipass regions in the Alps, but makes up in variety of terrain for any limits in expanse. Both skiing networks

are remarkably efficient and free of queues.

All through the night

Courchevel's snow-grooming

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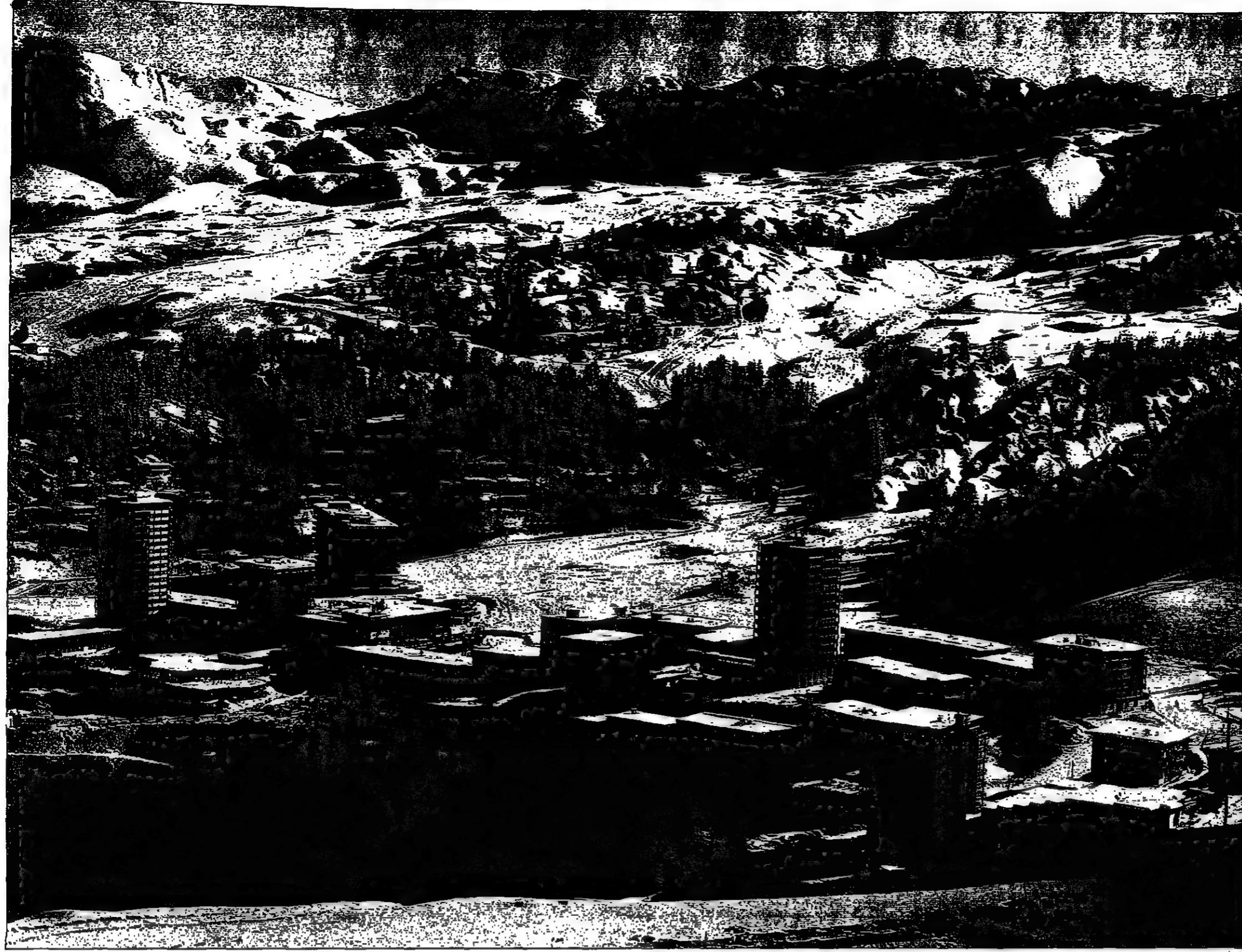
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to making the top ten of the

TRAVEL

...on what the leading ski countries have to offer in the way of amenities, ambience and accommodation



The huge range of skiing around La Plagne is matched by competitive pricing in what seems to be a surplus of self-catering accommodation. Good skiers can have a good holiday, with the emphasis on skiing

Continued from page 20
features an irritating long and winding road.

Val d'Isère is the resort choice for the bulk of Britain's best skiers, though for serious off-piste it has to rank behind Chamonix and Verbier, and cult resorts such as La Grave and Alagna.

What expert skiers get in Val d'Isère is excellent guiding services from independent operators, such as the Zimmer brothers' Top Ski, a byword among British off-piste enthusiasts.

usists, and plenty of untracked terrain, even if it does lack the couloirs and crevasses.

The pistes of Tignes and Val d'Isère are nothing like so well groomed as those of the Trois Vallées, and intermediates face some nasty passages in places. But well-advised beginners will not be intimidated either.

Tignes is considerably less attractive a village than Val d'Isère, which itself suffers from neon and metal fatigue

all along the straggling main street. But Tignes is priced accordingly. Val d'Isère is not, though newer hamlet-style developments in rough local stone are both charming and well appointed inside.

La Plagne, Les Arcs, Flaine and all along the straggling main street. But Tignes is priced accordingly. Val d'Isère is not, though newer hamlet-style developments in rough local stone are both charming and well appointed inside.

The French invented the concept of concrete in snow tower blocks at altitude in areas where no previous villages existed. These remain masterpieces of skiing convenience and price consciousness, at the cost of genuine village ambience.

Critics of the blocks say they are ugly and unnatural. Covering the concrete with wood helps. But the experience of living inside is inescapably analogous to life or at least a week in prison.

Popular with school groups, these resorts suffer queues and chaos during the French school holidays in February. Les Arcs is typical of the purpose-built concept, with complexes at various altitudes but, thanks to a quick ten-minute connection, Arcs offers the unusual option of staying down in reasonably priced Bourg St Maurice, which doesn't seem to have a clue there's a major resort overhead.

The skiing features a vertical descent of about 2000m and is good enough for people to have been killed there, though in general skiing is wide open and uncrowded.

rather than threatening. In each sector at least one ski lift is free, meaning beginners or occasional skiers need never buy a skipass.

La Plagne spreads the architectural blot around 11 residential "stations", the lower complexes tending to be more nearly attractive.

The huge range of skiing is matched by very competitive pricing in what seems to be a surplus of self-catering accommodation. As in Les Arcs, good skiers can have a good skiing holiday, with the emphasis on skiing.

Children have been known to burst into tears at the first sight of Flaine's excrecent architecture, but parents rejoice at the short transfer, the car-free central area so easy for shopping and the utter absence of hoshott child-threatening expert skiers.

The Grand Massif ski-pass

area is only 40 kilometres smaller than the Espace Killy, and friendlier to beginners and early intermediates, who will find ample scope for cruising.

Risoul, Valmorel, Avoriaz

Finding a resort suitable for mixed abilities is difficult enough, without mixing the ages and, more often than not, trying to prove that three or four can ski as cheaply as two.

Risoul not only caters for children, but also for grandparents, who seem to find the large ski domain shared with Var easy and uncrowded.

Indeed, some pistes have been graded to look more difficult than they are. An effort at French animation is made — fireworks displays and

nightime snowboard jumping events. But most families retire early to their self-catered flats, missing the floor show, "Jane and her Serpents" at the Safari Club.

Valmorel's nursery slopes

are blocked off from passing skiers, who have a wide range of intermediate skiing to choose from in the ski-pass region. The Saperlipopette kindergarten is so popular that reservations are made a year in advance.

An effort to harmonise with nature by using stone and wood and by building small hamlets instead of massive tower blocks is largely successful, though ultimately this is a self catering, price conscious resort, and, significantly, was booked to the rafters all last season.

Avoriaz is the hub of Europe's fourth largest ski-pass region, the Portes du Soleil, part of 13 villages straddling the Swiss-French border.

Here, every effort is made to animate the tower blocks of Avoriaz, and with great success among young snowboarders especially. If it were another 1,000m higher, the Portes would eclipse the Trois Vallées in renown.

For the moment they are undervalued, both in price and popularity. And the vast scope of cross-frontier skiing, enlivened by indifferent signposting, makes for a ski safari-style adventure on groomed pistes which the whole family can share.

• NEXT WEEK: America

LEADING OPERATORS

■ THE biggest choice of French resorts (22) is offered by Crysair (0181-395 5146). First Choice (0161-745 7000) has 19. Thomson (0181-780 4444) both 18. Neilson (0113 239 4525) has 16 and Airtours (01706 260000) 12.

■ A HOST of specialists, some dealing with only one resort, some focusing on off-piste or weekends, has evolved in France. Club Med (0171-581 1161) offers the French way to ski France and features truly all-inclusive pricing — lift passes, tuition, full board, child-minding and insurance at nine French resorts.

The Ski Company (0171-730 9600). Après ski champagne, certified guides and elegant accommodation, puts the company on the top rung of the luxury ladder in Val d'Isère, Chamonix, Méribel and the Portes du Soleil.

Ski Esprit (01259 616789), which wrote the book on holidays with children, now offers non-smoking chalets in Chamonix, Morzine, La Plagne and Courchevel, and a money-back guarantee on childcare services.

Ski Peak (01252 794941). This small firm, operating only in Vaujany on the outskirts of Alpe d'Huez, has excellent child-minding facilities.

Collineige (01276 24262) has the best year-round chalets and old farmhouses in Chamonix and Argentière. It is also the British agent for mountain guides in Chamonix.

Flerski (01451 844788), the specialists in corporate entertainment, weekend and flexible breaks in Courchevel, now has its own hotel there, as well as luxurious accommodation.

Méribel (01492 518555), with drive-yourself self-catering, makes skiing affordable at 23 resorts.

Ski Weekend (01367 241630). In addition to its hotel programme for weekend skiers in Chamonix, attracting skiers of all levels, the company organises expeditions to the cult resort of La Grave and couloir descents on Mont Blanc.

YES (0181-871 5171). Exclusive to Val d'Isère and claiming more and better chalets than other operators, the company's service and Sundays-only departures guarantee a regular 75 per cent return rate.

CALLING HOME

THIS winter, France is dropping its 19 prefix for international calls made from inside the country in favour of the worldwide standard 00 code. Travellers trying to reach French resorts and flat-leaving agencies from Britain should note that additional numbers have been prefixed to each regional dialling code. For all skiing areas in the southwestern sector, including the main resorts covered by tour operators, this prefix is 4.

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A LUXURY WEEK ON THE NILE

A cruise along the Nile on a deluxe vessel is not large, and like-minded travellers has got to be one of the better ways of escaping the uncertain British weather. Thus this arrangement represents extraordinary value since the tariff includes all meals, transfers, guides and excursions. If you are looking for a true escape with that magical combination of culture and relaxation, then this is surely an opportunity that should not be missed.

ITINERARY IN BRIEF

Flight from Gatwick to Aswan and join the MS Giselle for the 5-night cruise. Cruise to Edfu to see its temples, and on to Luxor for the Temple of Karnak. Cruise to Kom Ombo returning to Aswan with a full sightseeing programme (optional excursion by coach to Abu Simbel 4/5).

THE MS GISELLE

The MS Giselle is the newest of the luxury vessels on the Nile and benefits from some of the largest cabins available and state-of-the-art systems. The vessel has been furnished and decorated to a high standard in the style of a traditional gentleman's

Cruise between Aswan and Luxor on the 5-star deluxe MS Giselle, one of the finest vessels on the Nile

7 nights from £495.00*

club with extensive wood paneling and a musical theme running throughout. All cabins have minimum dimensions of 22 square metres with air-conditioning, panoramic windows and ensuite facilities and, unusually for a river vessel, full tub baths. Public facilities include a large reception with guest services desk and shop, a fine restaurant, bar and swimming pool. Each cruise has knowledgeable guides and Egyptologists.

DEPARTURES & PRICES

Mondays - per person in twin

1996 Nov 25* £645

Dec 2* 9* £600 - Dec 30 £6795

*the first 20 places on these dates are at a premium price of £695 per person. Note the company reserves the right to upgrade to a super-crewed if necessary.

1997 Jan 6, 13, 20, 27 £655

Feb 3, 10, 17, 24 £655

Mar 3, 10, 17, 24 £655 - Mar 31 £655 - Apr 7, 14, 21, 28 £655

Single cabin £225 - Upper decks £125

Inclusive air travel, transfers, 7 nights on the Giselle, full English-speaking crew, all meals, excursions, programme, local representatives. Not included: insurance, overexposure, tips, etc. All bookings are subject to our Conditions of Booking, available on request.

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Britain: The timeless charm of Tudor inns in Teesdale and lovely Barnard Castle, a medieval market town

The modest charm of Georgian Yarm

Nothing prepares you for Yarm. Trapped as it is in a loop of the Tees, you cannot approach it from the west; to the south is undulating farmland which gives no hint that it holds anything out of the ordinary: just over the river are the modern and characterless villages of Egglecliff and Eaglescliffe, and five miles away is the ugly sprawl of Teesside. But suddenly there is Yarm, Georgian and unpretentious, one of the most enchanting and perfectly preserved towns in England.

"If anything could destroy it," a friend said, "the traffic would." But it won't. A few years ago a bypass was constructed to rid the town of the 19,000 vehicles which poured down the High Street every day along the A19 from Stockton to York. It did nothing of the kind: it merely proved what the Government will not recognise — that the more roads you build, the more vehicles there will be to use them. Today there are just as many, and the wide, cobbled shoulders that pack the just-as-tight with parked cars.

And there, suddenly, is the splendid High Street, with the Town Hall which was built in 1710 in the Dutch style brought over by William III, stranded in a sea of traffic. The street is

Georgian — it was designated a conservation area in 1975 — but although there is a fine terrace of merchants' houses which would grace any town in England, together with a few other buildings of genuine distinction, you would hardly describe it as aristocratic. The greater part of it consists of unpretentious domestic buildings, mostly of three storeys, their pantiled roofs all at different levels.

When these houses were built, Yarm must have been a deep-drinking town, as well as an important coaching stop.

There were then 16 inns and taverns in the High Street; eight of them are still there. One, the Ketton Ox, named after a shorthorn which was reared nearby and weighed 220 stone when it was slaughtered in 1801, is thought to be more than 400 years old, and was used for cock-fighting. A plaque on the wall of the George and Dragon Hotel stakes Yarm's claim to a place in history more firmly than anything else in the town. Here, it says, on February 12, 1820, was held the first meeting, under the chairmanship of Thomas Meynell, of a committee to establish the world's first railway. Only a year earlier the landed gentry, who were determined to protect their property, had blocked a Parliamentary Bill

to build the line; now revised proposals went through almost on the nod. A new committee met in Darlington and appointed an almost uneducated engine-wright, who lived in a cottage at Killingworth, as engineer. His name was George Stephenson. Four years later the Stockton to Darlington line was opened, along which Stephenson's Locomotion No 1 pulled the earliest passenger carriages. Between 1799 and 1851 a 43-arch viaduct was built across the Tees; mercifully only two of them can be glimpsed beyond the end of the High Street.

But Yarm's history goes back many centuries beyond the railway. Long before the Domesday Book there was a community here, and in the early Middle Ages, when it was the only port on the Tees, it had a thriving export trade in wheat and wool. It became even more prosperous in 1400 when Bishop Walter Skirlaw built a bridge over the Tees which was nearer to the sea than any other. Part of it still exists. By Elizabeth I's time the town's corn market made it a trading centre for a wide area.

Yarm's great days lasted only until the beginning of the 18th century, when the development of Stockton, which was nearer the sea, forced it into slow decline. Then, with the 20th century, came the traffic which Yarm can neither resist nor contain.

The town looks brighter and more confident than it did when I saw it 20 years ago. Buildings have been freshly painted, in a way that brings out the homogenous character of these unplanned houses and shops. And, traffic or no traffic, the old town is safe.

DEREK SEVERN

Places to stay: **Croftons Hall Hotel, Croftons, near Yarm, North Yorkshire (01642 702398) single room £104, double from £120. AA Hotel of the Year 1995.**

Tall Tree Hotel, Green Lane, Yarm, Cleveland (01627 8050), single £35, double £52. VAT and full English breakfast inclusive. Leisure.



Yarm's Town Hall was built in 1710 in the Dutch style.



County Bridge at Barnard Castle was built in 1335. In the 17th century a tiny chapel on the bridge served as the setting for illegal marriages

Up hill and down dale

The experience of Upper Teesdale's most awesome phenomena left me completely exhausted. High Force is where the Tees swells to a raging inferno and plunges 70ft into a vast gorge over the tallest single-drop waterfall in England.

This is one of the loveliest of all Durham Dales, a polka-dot landscape, green valleys dotted with sheep, and a string of picturesque villages where cottages cluster around multiple village greens.

It was that difficult hour, too late for tea, too early for dinner, I had been on the road since dawn. I had tramped the North Pennine Moors, heard the cry of the curlew, wandered up hill and down dale, viewed High Force from below, and staggered my way up the sheer cliff for the view from the top — in other words, I had had quite enough nature.

Half an hour later I drove into Barnard Castle, everything you could wish for in a medieval market town. Old Barney, as it is affectionately known, grew around the Norman stronghold built by Bernard Balliol in 1125. Its history unfolds in a series of blue plaques all over town: The King's Head, in Horsemarket, was Dickens' base while he researched the evils of Victorian education.

His 1837 trip to Teesdale inspired *Nicholas Nickleby*,



Mr Shaw's Academy at Bowes, providing a model for the infamous Dotheboys Hall; in Galgate two plaques commemorate Cyril Northcote Parkinson, discoverer of Parkinson's Law — "Work expands to fill the time available for its completion" — and Sir Roger Murchison, who had a town in New Zealand, falls on the Nile, a mountain range and a river in Australia, and a sound in Greenland named after him.

Along the Bank, the town's oldest street, weavers have been replaced by antique dealers, but two Tudor inns still dispense hospitality, the Old Well Inn, and Blagvates House, now a chic restaurant, where Cromwell was welcomed in 1648.

The octagonal Buttermarket is considered Northumbria's finest, but when built in 1742, in the normal reaction to "modern" architecture, it was

decried as a blot on the landscape. Upstairs served as the town hall, court room, prison and fire station. John Wesley lived to regret giving a sermon there — they turned the fire hoses on him.

But it is the castle itself that lifts the town into the realms of romance, even though all that remain are fragments of ruins and ghosts of its tumultuous past. It towers high on a cliff overlooking the Tees, northern boundary of the York Viking Kingdom, northeastern

boundary of the Domesday survey and until 1974 the boundary between Durham and Yorkshire.

The view down to the bridge might ring bells with Richard III who added the castle to his estates on his marriage to Lady Anne Nevill.

County Bridge was built in 1335 to replace the Roman ford linking the forts at Bowes and Binchester. It enjoyed 15 minutes of fame in 1660 when Cuthbert Hilton, a clerk, thought up a way of performing illegal marriages.

In those days people thought twice before incurring the wrath of the Bishop of Durham or the Archbishop of York. A tiny chapel was built at the centre of the bridge and at the appropriate moment the happy couple were instructed to leap in the air, thereby rendering them in neither county at the moment of matrimony.

Next morning I set off along Newgate past the alley where a carving over a lintel reads

Remember Man is Mortal. to Teesdale's most unexpected delight, a French Renaissance-style palace. The John and Josephine Bowes Museum.

The Bowes were an unlikely pair, he a Teesdale businessman and MP, she a Parisienne actress and artist. Their plan was to build their treasure house for the public to enjoy in Calais but with French revolutionary fervour a little too hot for comfort, they chose Teesdale instead.

For 15 years they worked to fill their museum with the best art Europe could offer, paintings by El Greco, Goya, Canaletto, fine English and French furniture, porcelain, superb tapestries and oddities such as the silver swan automaton.

Sadly both Mr and Mrs Bowes died before the grand opening. It remains their splendid memorial, and Teesdale's fine contribution, *Extensis Cordate*.

ROS DRINKWATER



DURHAM DALES FACT FILE

■ The Durham Dales, between the Yorkshire Dales and the Northumberland National Park, are easily reached via the A1 to Scotch Corner, then the A165 to Barnard Castle. Nearest rail connection in Darlington where hire cars are available. Prebooking essential.

■ Where to stay: Old Well Inn, 21 The Bank, Barnard Castle; traditional hospitality at this Tudor Inn, sloping floors and fine food; doubles from £40 (01833 690130) Headlam Hall Hotel, Gainford; country house hotel in beautiful grounds; doubles from £70.00 (01622 722850); Morris Arms Hotel, Great Bridge, Rokeby (A66), close to Robin Hood Park, Palladian mansion, immaculately kept by Sir Walter Scott and with strong Dickensian connections; double B&B from £70.00 per night (01833 627232).

■ John & Josephine Bowes Museum, Newgate, Barnard Castle (01833 690600). Raby Castle, Stanhope, ancient seat of the "kingmaker" Neville and one of England's most impressive medieval castles, magnificently furnished in baronial style.

■ Egglestone Abbey, just outside Barnard Castle, 12th-century ruined abbey built for the Premonstratensian Order, on a romantic site overlooking the Tees.

■ Tourist Information Centre, Barnard Castle 43, Galgate, Barnard Castle, County Durham (01833 690909).

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Choice island

SPAIN in general, and Majorca in particular remain by far the No 1 choice for British holidaymakers booking through travel agents according to a survey by Lunn Poly, the Thomson-owned agency. During summer 1996, in all but one British mainland region, Majorca was the favourite, the exception being Greater London, where the island came equal second with Turkey (7 per cent), one per cent behind the whole of France.

This year, long haul holidays account for 13 per cent of the total (10 per cent last year), with Florida claiming 38 per cent, the Caribbean 20 per cent, the Dominican Republic 8 per cent, Jamaica and Barbados 3 per cent each and the Bahamas 1 per cent.

The survey showed that half a pint of beer costs 45p in Turkey and £1.93 in France; cup of coffee is 28p in Portugal, £2.14 in Hong Kong; a 10 minute taxi ride is £1.51 in Cyprus and £8 in Austria, a bottle of wine costs 91p in Spain and £5.52 in Australia, while a meal for two with wine costs £11.27 in Turkey, £31.13 in Austria and £52.91 in Australia.

Holidays for this winter are following the well-established pattern: Spain is up 1 per cent with 47 per cent, next comes the United States with 11 per cent (10 per cent last winter), the Caribbean 7 per cent (5 per cent) with Italy, Portugal, Cyprus, India and Malta all around the 3 per cent to 4 per cent mark.



Eurostar offers winter trips to the Alps for £144 return

Alps by rail

EVERY Saturday from 21 December until 15 March, French Railways (0181-880 8162) offer a winter service on Eurostar to Lille, then by TGV to Bourg St Maurice and most intermediate stations in the Alps. In addition, an overnight train from Lille will run every Friday to Bourg St Maurice, St Gervais and Briancon. Both services cost £144 return, with a couchette on the overnight train.

Sea culture

THE cultural cruise operator Swan Hellenic (0171-800 2200) offers a great variety of specialist cruises that feature historic destinations around the world with guest lectures from eminent journalists, his-

tors, archaeologists and biologists. The ship *Minerva* returns to the Red Sea in March 1997 for the Crucible of Civilisation cruise, which features Jordan and Egypt and offers an opportunity to scuba dive in the Red Sea. The cruise is accompanied by the marine biologist Dr David Irvine. Fares start from £1,630.

Call home

THOMAS COOK has launched a rechargeable international phonecard, usable in 50 countries. The card, in £10 and £20 denominations, can be recharged over the telephone. Travellers are paying over the odds to phone home. One Madeira hotel charges a 776 per cent mark-up; the best deal was a 40 per cent mark up in Majorca. The new card is available from Cook's 550-plus UK shops and bureaux de change.

English only

DETERMINED English-only speakers can feel safe in Wolsey Lodge's (01449 741 297) privately-owned B&Bs in Spain, Italy and France, ranging from chateaux and manor houses to 200-year-old farms and 17th-century Tuscan villas — they all have English speaking British hosts.

A night's B&B in a Perigord mill house costs £30 each; or £30-35 in an Edwardian house on a castle and cork estate overlooking the Bay of Gibraltar. Wolsey Lodges has 224 members in Britain, is a consortium of privately owned homes that welcome paying guests.

All downhill

WEDDINGS can be arranged in the romantic Mountain Chapel on Mont Mansfield in Stowe, Vermont, New England, as an optional extra on skiing holidays with Made to Measure Holidays (01243 533333). The price of £200 includes the marriage licence, use of the chapel and the services of a judge-minister "who usually expects a tip". Staying in the honeymoon suite at the family-run Timberholm Inn with log fires costs from £1,750 B&B per couple, including flights to Montreal, about 90 minutes' drive away, and a 90-minute flight back.

The company also offers ski holidays in Switzerland (seven days B&B from £467 including flights), Alpbach in Austria (seven nights from £569) France and Canada.



The statue of Christ overlooking Rio de Janeiro. Journey Latin America offers a seven-night break in Rio for £781

Rio bound

JOURNEY Latin America (0181-747 3108) offer seven-night city breaks to Rio de Janeiro for £781, Santiago de Chile from £781, and Buenos Aires from £836, before December 1. Prices include flights from Heathrow, five nights' accommodation in a superior tourist class hotel, and a half-day city tour. Passengers may extend their stay up to 90 days.

Food school

VISITORS to Paris can join the Léonore Ecole des Amateurs Gastronomes (00 33 1 45 07 71 71) in the Avenue Victor Hugo for a day course for Fr980 (£125) or a half day for Fr570 (£72); each session is dedicated to a single subject — pastries, sauces, or terrines — and is led by bilingual tutors. The school is open six days a week, and students may take the results of their labours away. Five half-day tickets cost Fr2,280 (£260).

Safe chalet

A FORMER Resistance safe house during the Second World War — a plaque commemorates four local members shot for their activities in the area — perched on the

slopes above Méribel, is one of the more unusual chalets on offer to skiers from the sacking specialists Meriski (0145 844 788).

The chalet was converted after the war into a small hotel patronised by the French glitterati, and also by Lord Hunt after his successful Everest expedition, and is now a comfortable base for eight people, situated by one of the 1992 Olympic pistes. It can only be reached on skis or on foot and an all-inclusive week costs from £529.

Chips are off

WITH IBIZA sloughing off its lager-and-crabs reputation following a government-funded billion peseta clean-up, Magia de Spain (0181-748 4220) has introduced the island into its 1997 programme with houses, villas and small hotels in the countryside, above the genuinely unspoilt resort of Cala d'Al Vila, in the heart of Ibiza Town.

The Hotel El Palacio is built into the original city walls and decorated in Hollywood style — the James Dean and Marilyn Monroe suites are adorned with their personal possessions. A week's B&B costs from £775.

Today's stars flock to Pikes, the exuberantly decorated 15th-century farmhouse, costing from £615-£879 B&B per week.

Fun boat

P&O (0171-800 2222) has introduced a Scrabble cruise, hosted by a former national Scrabble champion, and the Schweppes Sporting Challenge, which will feature a selection of sporting celebrities and include quizzes and games with ticket prizes for major sporting events. P&O is

also featuring the popular Archers cruise again in its 1997 programme.

Marco Polo

ORIENT Lines is featuring a growing number of themed cruises on its ship, the *Marco Polo*. Topics include wildlife of the Indian Ocean with David Bellamy, the television naturalist, as guest lecturer, bowls with the former world champion David Bryant, astronomy and wines of the world. A 17-day gardening theme cruise in March 1996 visiting Australia and the Java Sea, features the writer and broadcaster Nigel Colborn. Prices start at £2,245.

Women only

HOLIDAYS for women only — single, separated, divorced or married but "without encumbrances" are offered in Ayia Napa, Cyprus, by Aphrodite Tours (0161-477 4521).

Accommodation is in private rooms, the holidays are escorted by a woman guide, and the company promises "an opportunity to find romance or just have a good laugh". There are three departures in 1996 at prices from £345 for seven days and £420 for 14, including flights and B&B accommodation.

hat saying "Groom Enrol". Both Fauchon and Hédier have discovered a growing market in prepared dinners, duck or fish in complex sauces that allow the Parisian working woman to give a dinner party without entering the kitchen.

This is food that transcends mere cooking. On Hédier's wall, a notice says: "Conviviality is the dish of the day, laughter is drunk like a good wine, ideas are good like good bread, exquisite flavours of sweet desserts make your company even more beautiful and good coffee gives wings."

KATE MUIR

• Fauchon, 36, Place de la Madeleine, 8th, (01 42 60 111). Hédier, 21, Place de la Madeleine, 8th, (01 42 88 88). La Grande Epicerie, Bon Marché, (stocks Fauchon goods and other specialties) 38, Rue de Sèvres, 7th, (43 39 81 00).

• Les Métiers d'Art de la Couture, exhibition of the crafts behind haute couture — the embroiderers, shoemakers, glove makers, jewellers — and the finished objects at Printemps department store, Boulevard Haussmann, 9th, from 7 to 26 October.

Chocolate soldiers set for war

The opposing armies face one another across the Place de la Madeleine, waiting each morning for battle to commence. In the right-hand corner, uniformed in brown, is Fauchon, and in the left, wearing red, Hédier.

Paris's grandest food emporium — sworn enemies — watch each other's every move. Their weaponry is displayed in terrifying price tags and competing window displays, oozing with crystallised fruit, slabs of chocolate and autumn game birds.

Fortunately for any serious foodie, or even foodie-voyeur, there are reasons to go to both shops for each has its strengths. Fauchon is the more exhaustive, with 20,000 prod-

ucts, enormous fresh food counters and a daily patisserie display to die for.

Hédier has a smaller range of 6,000 products, but is in some ways "plus snob", as the Parisians say, with its exquisite red and black packaging and pungent smell of coffee.

Auguste Fauchon's empire started as an exotic fruit stall on the Madeleine 110 years ago, and has expanded to cover half a block, including five restaurants. Ferdinand Hédier had a head start, however, opening his first spice and fruit shop in Paris in 1850, and moving to the Madeleine in 1854.

M Fauchon claims to have brought the first avocados to

the city and was forced to give them away to doubting customers. However, M Hédier was first with the pineapple, tested on his friends Eugène Delacroix and Alexandre Dumas.

Thus the noble lineage of neither shop is in doubt. Fauchon is rather old-fashioned, but behind every counter is an expert who will go into extreme detail if encouraged. A sommelier will take you on a tour of the stone wine cellar, stretching in a warren under the streets, pointing out Taittinger champagne in bottles designed by Roy Lichtenstein, and an affordable little Pouilly Fuisse at Fr44.

In the patisserie window at present there are slices a foot tall, topped by an enormous cherry, each slice being a cake in itself, concreted in chocolate. The tourists are forced to buy less fragile items so the English buy mustard and the Japanese buy tea, both easily obtained on native soil. Then there are Fr15 jams, including rose petal and jasmine.

Hédier also does extraordinary jams and jellies in small, home-made style batches, including a curious marmalade with entire slices of orange packing the jar. The coffee counter will grind beans and

brew a test cup of your chosen blend, and there are teas by the dozen, some set out for tasting beneath signs saying: "The 1996 first flush Darjeeling has arrived!"

The shop has modernised, however, and there are four

bars serving "Groom Enrol". Both Fauchon and Hédier have discovered a growing market in prepared dinners, duck or fish in complex sauces that allow the Parisian working woman to give a dinner party without entering the kitchen.

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• Les Métiers d'Art de la Couture, exhibition of the crafts behind haute couture — the embroiderers, shoemakers, glove makers, jewellers — and the finished objects at Printemps department store, Boulevard Haussmann, 9th, from 7 to 26 October.

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GAMES

27

CHESS

by Raymond Keene

The Chess Olympiad in Erevan, Armenia, is over, and a particular success story was the performance of the English women's team including the new teenage talents of Harriet Hunt and Ruth Walker. Susan Lalic (known as a junior by her maiden name of Susan Walker) is a veteran by comparison, and she too turned in an outstanding result. She held her own on the top board against the world's best, winning the bronze medal for individual performance, and will have been especially proud of the following success against the former women's world champion from China.

White: Xie Jun
Black: Susan Lalic
Erevan Olympiad, Sept 1996
Caro-Kann Defence

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5
3 e5 c5
This is a bold gambit continuation, favoured on theory. 3... Bf5 is the standard move, but it does not allow Black to escape from a complicated muddle game.

4 dxe5 The theoretical recommendation, regarded as strong for White ever since the Tal-Borvink world championship match of 1961.

4... Nc6 5 Bb5 6 e6
6 Nc3 Ng5 7 c3 Bd7

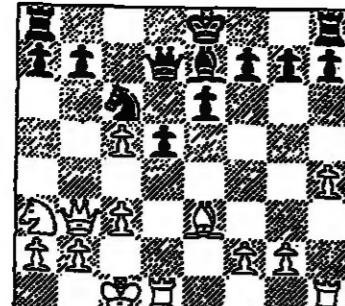
Was this move a blunder, overlooking Black's neat tactical response which regains the pawn, or did White hope to gain time for an attack by returning the material? In any case 8 Bxb5 Nxb5 9 Nf3 Qc7 10 Bd4 cements the extra pawn and gives Black more problems.

8... Nxe5 9 Nxe5. If 9 Bxd5 Nxd7.

9... Bxb5 10 Na3 Bd7
11 Nc3 Nc5 12 Nxd7 Qxd7

By returning the pawn, White has gained active play for her pieces, and the Chinese former champion now launches a dangerous strike against the future destination of the black king.

However, Black retains the residual advantage of a sturdy central pawn majority. This could well prove important in future hand-to-hand fighting.



14... 0-0 15 b5 b6. A bold counter, offering a pawn to open up lines against the white king.

16 h6 g6 17 cxb6 axb6
18 Nc2

If 18 Bxb6 Bxa3 19 bxa3 Rfb8 leaves White badly pinned.

18... Bc5 19 cd. So, Black has avoided losing a pawn, while her central pawn majority has now furnished a passed pawn and is generally on the march.

20 Kb1 e5 21 Bc1 Qe8

Also possible is the immediate 22... Na5, but Black prefers to keep this possibility as a threat.

23 f3 Nc5 24 Qd3 Nxe4

A wonderful idea. If White accepts the sacrifice with 26 bx4 then 26... bx4 followed by... Rfb8+ and... c3 would give Black an overwhelming attack.

25 Rf2 Qe6 27 Ne1 Nc3+

28 Bxa3 Bxa3 29 Kc2 Bb8

Not only clearing the a-file for Black's attack, but targeting White's weakness on h6.

30 fxe5 Kxe5. An unpleasant shock for White. If now 31 Rxe5 Qxa2+ 32 Kc1 Ba3 mate.

31 Rdd2 Rxe2 32 Qxe2 Bb8

33 Rxd4 Qc5 34 Qc4 Qf6

35 Nf3 Bg7 36 Qd5 Qf8

37 Rf2 Rb4 38 Qd6 Rb8

39 Qd7 Bh6

White's king is exposed, and resistance is futile.

40 Rd1 Ra8 41 Qd4 Qxg4

42 bx4 Rxe4 43 Rd7 Ra3

44 Kh2 Bg7+ 45 Kf3 Be3

46 a4 bxa3

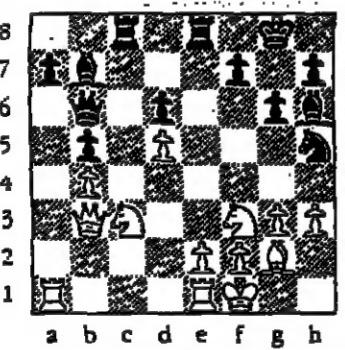
White resigns.

An elegant final point. After 47 Kxc3 a2 Black wins further material.

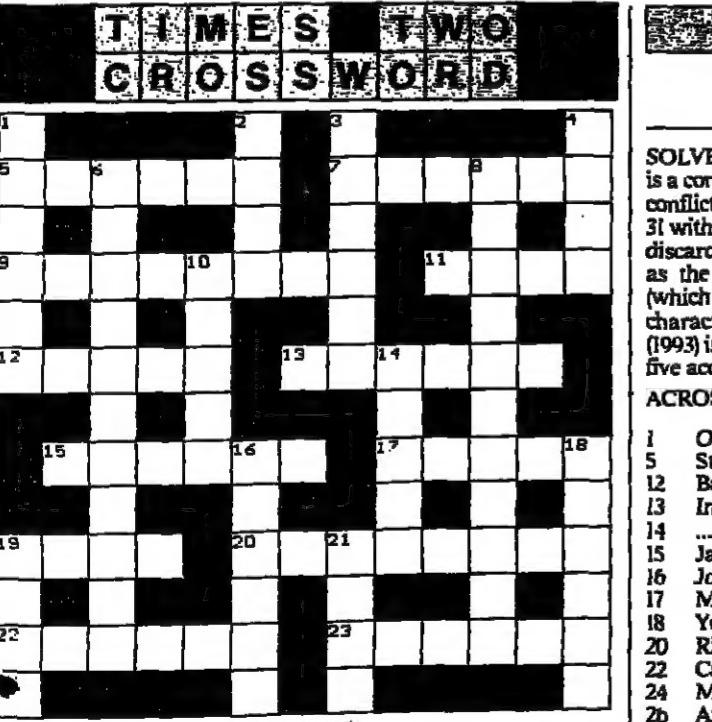
WINNING MOVE

By Raymond Keene

Black to play. This position is from the game Agdestein - Wells, Gausdal 1983. The Norwegian Agdestein has achieved the unusual double of becoming a grandmaster while also playing international football for his country. Here, however, he finds himself on the wrong end of a powerful one-two. How did Black win swiftly? Send you answers on a postcard to *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. The first three correct answers drawn on Thursday will win a British Chess Magazine publication. The answer will be published next Saturday. Last week's solution: 1... Rg1+



Last week's winners: D A S Price, Preston; D K Das, Merseyside; A C Nash, Ashford, Kent.



CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- Pay to protect (6)
- Hired killer (3,3)
- A fish: be out of one's depth (6)
- A defect (4)
- (Bird) set to sleep (5)
- Sof breez (6)
- Cheap material, esp. cloth (6)
- Copy another's words; price a job (5)
- Be suspended (4)
- List of dates, events (8)
- Blaise —, wrote *Pensées* (6)
- Beline (6)

DOWN

- Steal petrify (6)
- Supply (input); eat (4)
- Accuse; run into attack (6)
- To see the cherry hung with — (House) (4)
- Informal vote (4,2,5)
- Pamper (11)
- Wrote down; famous (5)
- (Fit of) resentment (5)
- Submissive (6)
- Small task (6)
- Open-air swimming-pool (4)
- Keep navy in harbour (5)

SOLUTION TO NO 904

ACROSS: 2 Bagpipes 6 Girder 8 Carpet 9 Bellows 10 Erie 12 Sanguinary 16 Taskmaster 18 Eaves 20 Snuggle 21 Valley 22 Saturn 23 Sheepish

DOWN: 1 Liberal 2 Brownies 3 Prayer 4 Paper 5 Sister 7 Delegate 11 Eyesight 13 Admision 14 Declare 15 Jeeves 17 Asleep 19 Value

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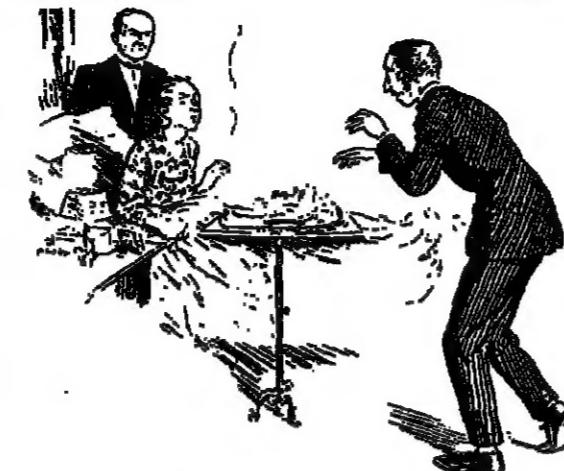
PUNCHLINE

READERS are invited to write an amusing caption for the cartoon (right), from *The Strand Magazine* (reproduced with permission from Westminster Libraries, Sherlock Holmes Collection, Marylebone Library).

The cartoon will be printed again next week on the Games page with a caption selected from those submitted.

Send caption suggestions on a postcard with your name and address to: Strand Caption (20), Weekend Games Page, *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN.

The Editor's decision is final. The closing date for entries is Wednesday, October 9.



'I WISH WE HUNG OUR WASHING OUT' SAID TINY

BRIDGE

by Robert Sheehan

JOHN HOLLAND was the declarer on this hand, played in the trials to select the England team for the 1996/7 Macallan Camrose Trophy (the home internationals).

Dealer South Love all IMPs

N ♠ K985
W ♦ Q86
E ♣ K1076
S ♤ 1032
♦ ♣ AJ109742
♣ ♦ ♣ Q98854

S W N E
4H Dble 6H Dble

All Pass
Contract: Sh Hearts doubled by South.
Lead: The King of clubs

West's double was for take-out. Even with this intervention, it looks reasonable for North (Michelle Brunner) to bid Six Hearts. East clearly didn't trust her judgment.

Holland ruffed the opening lead in dummy. What now? South can count seven trump tricks in hand (provided the queen falls in two rounds), two ruffs in dummy and the aces of diamonds and spades. That makes eleven tricks.

Possibilities of a twelfth trick are a) that East may have doubleton 10 or jack of clubs, in which case leading the queen will mean the declarer can later establish a club trick; b) the queen of hearts may be singleton, in which case all dummy's hearts may be used for ruffing. A further point is that, if

diamonds or spades split 4-4, dummy's fifth card in that suit can be set up. Spades are the more likely candidate, as either East or West had five they might have bid them.

At trick two Holland cashed the ace of spades; he then ruffed a spade in hand, and tried his first chance of a twelfth trick by leading the queen of clubs. When West covered he ruffed in dummy; disappointingly, no honour fell from East. After a spade ruff in hand and a third club ruff with the king of hearts, he ruffed a third spade in hand. By this time dummy's last spade had been set up and this was the position (South on lead):

N ♠ K985
W ♦ Q86
E ♣ K1076
S ♤ 1032
♦ ♣ AJ10742
♣ ♦ ♣ Q98854

When all followed small to the ace of hearts the second chance of a twelfth trick had gone. One last chance — South exited with a heart. East had to win and play a diamond, and dummy's thirteenth spade and ace of diamonds took care of South's losing clubs. What Terence Reese used to call a "watch and wonder" hand — fascinating how it unfolded.

You see the lead to beat the slam? A trump.

WORD WATCHING

By Philip Howard

BARKING DEER

a. An East End pub

b. A Colour Sergeant

c. The munjuc

GONION

a. Jaw-jaw

b. A pickled onion

c. The point of a frieze

ALKAPTON

a. Bare-headed

b. A Greek vinegar-pot

c. Black urine

DIETL'S CRISIS

a. A severe belly-ache

b. A Balkan demarche

c. A pole-vault technique

Answers on page 21

COMPUTER GAMES AND PASTIMES

by Tim Wapshott



Crazy for Ragtime is illustrated with some sensational archive clips

composers has been missed.

Home music mixing in the Nineties calls for Data Becker's *Techno Maker* CD-Rom, in which you lay your own techno tracks using a combination of 140 audio samples.

External samples can also be included and rearranged in your creations.

The packaging claims, over-

zealously, that this software is

all you need to "get into the charts with your own cre-

ations", which says too much

about the state of today's

music charts. Still, the results

are good enough to keep you

locked into your compositions

well into the wee hours.

The tackiest musical title I've

come across for a long time is

Music Maker from Steinberg Music Sales. This CD-Rom

comes with a tiny plastic keyboard

which fits over a few rows of keys

on the QWERTY computer key-

board. Once in place, so long as

your fingers aren't too big and

tootle it, you play along with 15

classics. You can access iMS at

http://www.musicshop.co.uk.

"Extraordinary how potent

cheap music is," Noel Coward,

Private Lives (1930).

fortunately novelty compensates for tack. With the dainty keyboard in place, you play song melody lines if you're up to it. Variations permit those with little musical ability to hear all the right notes even if they depress all the wrong keys, while Drum Along lets you pound backing beats with a choice of tiny kits. Bob Geldof is 42 today and if you're short of a present for him you could do worse than a Music Maker. Alternatively, you could instantly order him a CD from the UK's newest music shop.

The Internet Music Shop (iMS) holds a database of 45,000 album CDs and those in stock can be ordered down the line during your visit. You can look up details of complete album catalogues for favourite artists and, in many cases, call up individual track listings. So, since there's no obligation to place an order, it becomes a handy music reference database in its own right. In addition to the catalogue, click into the virtual shop to listen to audio samples for a selection of upcoming releases.

You can access iMS at http://www.musicshop.co.uk.

"Everybody Wants to Rule The World. Back in the USSR and so on. Music Maker has all the might of a squeaky early Casio but

THE LISTENER CROSSWORD

No 3378: Thirty One by Radix

DOWN

- Wash railway truck (5)
- Leash? Yes, maybe, initial research suggests (3)
- Curling erratically without aid, like a tendril (7)
- I should become chief — the veteran isn't in touch (6)
- A variety of dark green mate in

FLORA BRITANNICA PART TWO: PLANT MAGIC AND MEDICINE

HERBAL HISTORY

Folk lore and fiction

The use of wild plants in herbal and folk medicine is on the increase in Britain again — although it is a highly subjective business and rarely tested scientifically. Personal faith, idiosyncratic sensitivities and mode of use all influence the results.

But there have been some discernible traditions. Most remedies must have been discovered by trial and error. In more recent times, trial and error as a scientific discipline has brought plant-based drugs into mainstream medicine — for example, digoxin from foxgloves.

It is hard for us to imagine the awe with which plants were held in a pre-scientific age. Barely distinguishable species could feed you, poison you or drive you mad. It is no wonder that all manner of theories were developed to explain and predict their effects. The most popular system was sympathetic magic. This was based on a search for analogy, association and pattern within nature, and in the belief that like (or sometimes unlike) would cure like. Ivy berries would cure drunkenness, because ivy strangles vines. Some authors believed that windy food-plants such as lentil could protect (by repulsion) a garden from gale damage.

It is easy to mock these beliefs as primitive and superstitious, but they were based on observation and

an ecological outlook. Sadly, in the expansive, market-driven climate of the 17th and 18th centuries, they began to be vulgarised by commercial herbalists into the Doctrine of Signatures. This decreed that all plants had been "signed" by the Creator with some physical clue to their medicinal qualities. Yellow flowers were marked out for jaundice. The blotchy, oval leaves of lungwort were ordained for diseased lungs. But the doctrine was responsible for probably the bulk of the *materia medica* in the written herbal tradition.

There have been some discernible traditions. Most remedies must have been discovered by trial and error. In more recent times, trial and error as a scientific discipline has brought plant-based drugs into mainstream medicine — for example, digoxin from foxgloves.



Plants on holy ground were considered especially strong

Richard Mabey's *Flora Britannica* is the definitive new guide to Britain's wild beauty. In the second of our extracts he explores native remedies

BOB GIBSONS



Foxgloves, the "witches thimbles" of medieval herbalists, standing their ground in the landscape of a nuclear age. Plant-based drugs such as digoxin from foxgloves have now been brought into mainstream medicine through scientific trial and error

CURING PLANTS

The healing powers of 'knit-bone'



Comfrey is often found at the wayside

Among the nationwide contributors to *Flora Britannica*, these three plants were reported as being most helpful:

Comfrey, *Symphytum officinale*, the native Common comfrey, *S. x uplandicum*, Russian comfrey and *S. asperum*. Rough comfrey — the most common species — tend to be used interchangeably in herbal medicine.

As can be guessed from its surviving common names — knitbone, rip-bone, ass-eat — comfrey is still used as a healing poultice for sprains, bruises and abrasions, and with more apparent success than almost any other herbal medicine. Comfrey (probably a corruption of the Latin *conferva*, a healing waterplant mentioned by Pliny, whose name is related to the verb *confervare*, to grow together) contains allantoin, which promotes healing in connective tissue. The medieval herbalists knew the plant as "boneset", and the root was lifted in spring, grated and used much as plaster of Paris is today. The whole plant was regarded as a master-healer and was used for everything from drawing splinters to easing backache.

Today, the uses are just as various. A contributor wrote: "I work as a GP, and one of my patients had a coronary artery bypass recently. The lower end of the long leg wound failed to heal despite numerous standard dressings of different medical products. After an interval of a few days I visited the house to find a beaming patient. The leg wound was healed. He was delighted to tell me he had made an infusion of comfrey from his own plants and applied dressings soaked in the infusion."

Similar stories of use on ageing and arthritic joints come from many places, including an old people's home in Staffordshire. Its use even extends to household pets. Another contributor wrote: "I used it in a poultice for a dog after a road accident — his fur grew back, so I used it on a bald guinea pig, whose fur also grew back."

The old practice of taking regular comfrey infusions or concentrated tablets for gastric ulcers and colitis is now discouraged, as the plant contains alkaloids that can cause liver damage. But comfrey was eaten quite widely in the Second World War and the occasional leaf eaten as a salad, or fried in batter is unlikely to cause any problems.

Feverfew, *Tanacetum parthenium*. As its name suggests, feverfew was a medicinal herb given for colds and fevers; in fact it was almost the classical and medieval world's aspirin, recommended for headaches, rheumatism, and general aches and pains. It reached Britain from the Balkans during the early Middle Ages. It has become one of the great success stories in herbal medicine and had its reputation vindicated by the City of London Migraine clinic. In 1978, after a newspaper story about a woman who had rid herself of migraines by chewing feverfew leaves daily, Dr Stewart Johnson decided to undertake a long-term survey of 270 feverfew-takers (partly to ensure that they were not harming themselves). The results were remarkable. After a leaf a day for three months, 70 per cent reported a significant decrease in the frequency or severity of their attacks. A third appeared to have abolished their attacks altogether. These results were confirmed by a more rigorous trial (BMJ, August 31, 1985). The active chemicals have now been isolated and shown to work by stopping blood vessels in the brain going into spasm, believed to be the immediate "cause" of migraines. Many sufferers now make feverfew pills, sandwiches or rubble the leaves.

Greater celandine, *Chelidonium majus*. The custard-yellow, buttercup-sized flowers of greater celandine would not immediately make you place it in the poppy family. But cut the stalk or leaves, and the latex characteristic of the family (orange in this species) comes out. The latex has a successful role in herbal medicine as a wart-remover. This always may have been its role in folk medicine; and the reason it is so often found in rough ground close to buildings may be because it was once a common plant in cottage phiscick gardens.

Edited extract from *Flora Britannica* to be published by Sinclair-Stevenson on Monday at £30. © 1996 Richard Mabey.

An aspirin by any other name

SCIENCE AND NATURE

■ Bog-myrtle

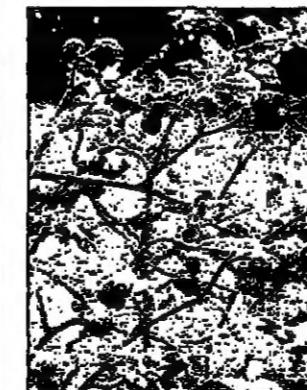
The aromatic resins have been used for scented candles, and the whole plant is still used as an insect repellent. In 1993 a midge-plant, *Myrica*, appeared on the market. It was produced from wild myrtle gathered by crofters on the Isle of Skye. Eight volunteers each had one arm covered in a gel made from the essential oil and the other left untreated. Over ten minutes, the untreated arms recorded 155 bites while the treated arms received just 13.

■ Broad-leaved dock

Still universally used to rub on nettle stings, dock has also been used as a more serious salve by adults. One contributor wrote: "My grandmother's practice was to collect young dock leaves before breakfast. These were still wet with dew. They were thoroughly washed before being added to pure melted pigs' lard. The mixture was allowed to reduce on a low heat until the residue was a pale green colour, after which it was strained into clean jars and, when set, sealed. This ointment was used for the treatment of piles."

■ Common valerian

The clusters of pinkish-white flowers, out from late June to August, have a high vanilla-like perfume which can become overpowering. The dried roots, by contrast, have a stale, rancid smell. (Valeric acid occurs both in the plant and in human perspiration.) Cats are fascinated by the smell and react in the same intoxicated way as they do to cat-mint. The roots have quite strong sedative properties, and an extract from them is found in many proprietary herbal tranquillisers. It is reputed to have been one of the drugs of which Hitler was fond.



Horse chestnut, left, is used in shampoos and gels, while rose-hip syrup is still made from farmed "wild" roses

■ Dandelion

Dandelion has long been used as a herbal diuretic and laxative. Its reputation has been confirmed scientifically. It contains high levels of potassium, an element that is removed from the body when urine production is stepped up.

■ Foxglove

The foxglove was once widely used in folk medicine, despite its high toxicity. Infusions of the leaves were given for sore throats and catarrh, and compresses for ulcers, swellings and bruises. But it was most frequently employed as a diuretic against dropsy. The 18th-century botanist and physician William Withering discovered that aescin, extracted from the nuts, is an effective remedy for sprains and bruising. The British Forestry Commission expects to grow 5,000 to 10,000 acres of horse-chestnuts to supply pharmaceutical firms.

■ Horse chestnut

The soap-like chemicals (saponins) conkers contain are added to some shampoos and shower-gels to enhance their "natural" image. German scientists have discovered that aescin, extracted from the nuts, is an effective remedy for sprains and bruising. The British Forestry Commission expects to grow 5,000 to 10,000 acres of horse-chestnuts to supply pharmaceutical firms.

■ Nettle family

The idea of using nettle stings as a counter-irritant to "warm away" inflammations, has some roots in sympathetic magic, but it also has a degree of practicality. According to the Elizabethan antiquary William Camden, the Romans, well aware that Britain would be cold, brought nettle with them to rub on their skins. One contributor wrote: "Both my mother and I use this plant on

any joint that gives painful symptoms. The treatment is simple — sting the joint liberally with the plant, and if possible move the joint well immediately after application. Some relief is felt within 30 minutes, but the gently tingling warmth is felt for many hours."

■ Rose-hips

During the Second World War, rose-hips came into their own in the form of rose-hip syrup. Nutritional scientists had known since the 1930s that wild hips had a higher proportion of vitamin C than any other common fruit or vegetable. (A cup of rose-hip pulp provides more vitamin C than 40 fresh oranges.) The syrup is still made commercially today, though from farmed "wild" roses, and many country-dwellers still make syrup, often following instructions given by the Ministry of Food in their booklet *Hedgerow Harvest* (1943). The hips have to be collected in late summer when they have just turned red, to maximise the vitamin C content. The process involves mincing, stewing and then, crucially, straining through a jelly-bag to remove the prickly seeds, which can be a dangerous internal irritant. Boiled again with sugar and reduced, the hips make a syrup.

■ Willow family

Bitter infusions of willow bark were employed as a remedy for chills, rheumatism and "the ague". The remedy worked, and in the 19th century the active ingredient was isolated from willow bark and meadowsweet. This led in 1899 to the synthesis of what was to become the world's most widely used drug, which the pharmaceutical company Bayer called aspirin, after the botanical name for meadow-sweet, *Spiraea ulmaria*.

NEXT WEEK

CUISINE SAUVAGE
Wild foods
and how to use themFLORA BRITANNICA
BOOK OFFER, PAGE 7

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Malati Barik had the harrowing experience of watching her mother go blind in her old age, and she was terrified that history was about to repeat itself when her own eyes began to cloud over. Thankfully she came to a Sight Savers eye hospital where surgeons carried out a simple cataract operation.

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